Don't miss next month's must-read: "The Minnies"

california JOURNAL

May 2000
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Health care coverage under examination

Over 7.3 million Californians have no health insurance

7,340,785

Is our Legislature turning a blind eye to the crisis?

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20 billion dollars...
3 million children...
2 million adults...

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California JOURNAL
May 2000
Volume XXX, Number 5

Upfront

Talking Points

Southern Exposure

The Bottom Line

Washington Perspective

We call 'em the Minnies.

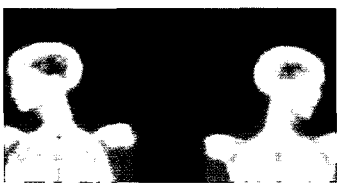
And for the past decade, they've been one of our signature endeavors. Like the Oscars and the Emmys, the Minnies are our chance to bestow honors on those deemed the Legislature's best and brightest.

Next month, our sixth edition of the Minnies rolls off the press. At this writing, the painstaking process of identifying the Legislature's shining stars is underway. But it's not just our opinion. Every two years since 1990, *California Journal's* writers and editors fan out to poll more than 100 lobbyists, lawmakers, legislative staffers, reporters, and Capitol insiders. We ask for their opinion on which legislators exhibit the most smarts, the most integrity, ambition, and influence. And who are the hardest-working and the best at problem-solving. Based on those interviews, we'll name one Legislator of the Year, as well as one Rookie of the Year, for the Capitol's best new kid on the block.

Claudia Buck

It's an issue you won't want to miss. The envelope, please.

It's an epidemic



Despite California's robust economy, not all is rosy when it comes to health care. The number of Californians going without medical insurance is spiking as rapidly as a sickbed fever. Can the Legislature tackle the problem?

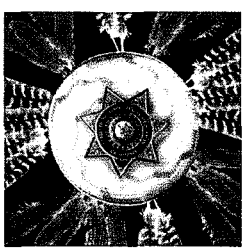
By Emelyn Rodriguez

Tribal teen pregnancies

Fewer teenage girls are getting pregnant in California these days. Except for Native Americans, who apparently aren't getting the health-care message preached by state health officials. The reasons are partly cultural and partly economic.

By Farrah M. McDaid

What do prison guards and Indians have in common?



A potent political action committee. As California's political odd couple, prison guards and Native Americans have the combined cash and clout to be heavy-hitters in elections. We'll tell you how and why they've amassed their power.

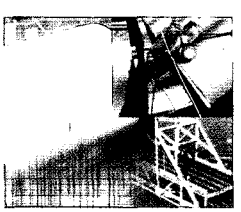
By Noel Brinkerhoff

Bill Jones: The new Republican rebel?

When Secretary of State Bill Jones switched his presidential endorsement to John McCain, he stunned his GOP colleagues. Was it political suicide or a shrewd vision?

By Bill Ainsworth

Shake, rattle 'n roll



With every earthquake that hits California, the state has learned some lessons. But are we prepared for the next big one?

By Gil Davis

When candidates come calling

No longer an easy date, organized labor now plays hard-to-get, being choosy when it comes to pairing up with candidates.

By Kathleen Les

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umbrage

And the winner is... the American public, for having been spared the spectacle of a Warren Beatty presidential campaign. The performance that sealed this honor for the body politic: Beatty's self-absorbed, borderline-incoherent ramble at this year's Academy Awards. Accepting the Irving Thalberg award at the March 26 Oscar ceremony, Beatty compared the thrill of winning "The Thalberg" to that of "oh, say being president," and allowed as how he was fine with the swap (as if it really were an issue). He then went on to apologize for "not speaking out enough," and promised he would "try to do better." Warren, baby, here's the deal. The only people who took that whole presidential thing seriously were the A-listers and wannabes you hang out with in Hollywooodland, and a D.C. pundit corps hoping to scam some California sun on the company dime. Here's our apology: We're sorry we devoted even this modest amount of space to a presidential aspiration that was little more than a long, strange ego trip. We'll try to do better.

Domestic goddess. The self-appointed "Queen of Suburban Grievances" is back with another bit of fluff to tickle the talk- radio crowd. Hard on the heels of last year's measure guaranteeing free air and water at gas stations, Senator Nell Soto (D-Pomona) has introduced a bill requiring that ice cream trucks sport flashing lights, presumably to warn pedestrians that they are entering a high-butterfat zone. The bill already has taken some hits for its goofiness. Assemblyman Howard Kaloogian's (R-Carlsbad) online newsletter offered an especially juicy jibe: "Any kid (and parent) who has bought a Fudgcicle or 'Pop Up' knows these mobile vendors are already required by law to cruise slowly through residential zones while broadcasting spine-curling melodies through cheap speakers." One could actually make the case that Soto's legislation might contribute to "road rage."

"Unless someone is a partisan, no one can be an independent."
— Calvin Coolidge

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Editor: Cynthia H. Craft

Managing Editor: Claudia Buck

Political Editor: Steve Scott

Senior Editor: Emelyn Rodriguez

Associate Editors: Noel Brinkerhoff, Kathleen Les, Melanie Smith

Assistant Editors: Farrah McDaid, Sekhar Padmanabhan

Contributing Editors: Lou Cannon, Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, Susan Rasky, Marc Sandalow, Dana Wilkie

Research Assistants: Melissa Mikesell, Tippy Young

Circulation: Tim Foster

Art Director: Dagmar Thompson

Art Staff: Suzanne Raney

Advertising : Naomi Johnston (916) 444-2840

Advertising Coordinator: Erica Pahl (916) 444-2840

Editor-in-Chief, State Net: A.G. Block

Founding Publisher: Thomas R. Hoeber

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Trend-spotter:

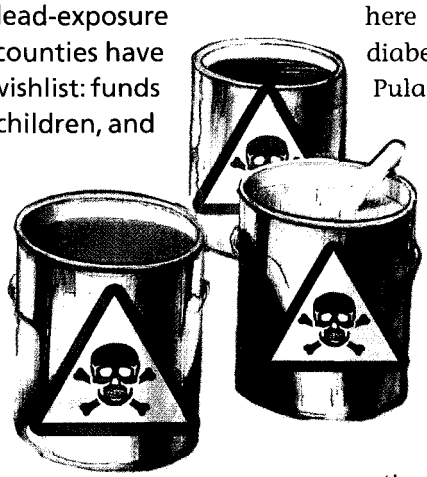
Are class-action suits the latest cash-in?

No one ever said California's county government folks aren't quick studies. And if they had, we'd shatter that fallacy right here and now.

Inspired by the avalanche of moneybags unleashed by class-action lawsuits against cigarette makers, and egged on by concessions won from pistol-peddlers, Santa Clara County is cooking up a lawsuit against lead paint manufacturers.

County counsel Ann Ravel says she is inviting other counties to join a class-action suit alleging the industry knew about — but deliberately covered up — lead hazards in paint marketed toward children. You know the ones: The product lines perfect for little Johnny's room because their durability makes the walls easy to wash.

Ravel says the suit will seek monetary damages to cover lead-exposure health costs that counties have paid. Also on the wishlist: funds for testing at-risk children, and money for public education, as well as paint removal.



In this era of Silicon Valley firsts, Santa Clara County is poised to take the lead in using a class-action suit to recoup county costs.

— Cynthia H. Craft

Coalition watch:

God, Mother Nature and Main Street

You know spring is here when Julia Butterfly is out of her tree and drawing crowds of up to 200 at Sacramento book-signings. Or maybe it's just another sign that the environment as an issue transcends politics-as-usual among savvy segments of the population.

Consider, for instance, the new alliance between labor and faith-based organizations to ensure that land-use decisions enhance a community's quality of life. It may sound like a stretch to link unions with churches with planning commissions, but actually — if you think about it — it's a pretty clever strategy for recasting the old debate over who gets to build what where.

Let's say, just to pick a random case out of the air, that the California Labor Federation wants to make another run at curbing the spread of "big box" stores, which incidentally are *not* union shops. Instead of weighing in at the state Capitol with a special interest bill to outlaw the sprawling discount stores (been there, done that), here is an alternative sweet enough to give a diabetic the shakes. Federation spokesman Art Pulaski, speaking with us the other day, said, "We're talking more with faith-based organizations about issues like the fiscalization of land use. [It's about] how ... when you bring in big box retailers and give tax credits ... we can lose sight of [using tax dollars to] enhance the quality of life" through parks or open space or recreation facilities.

It's the ultimate political game plan: After all, why rely solely on a fat-cat connection in the Capitol when you can get God, Mother Nature and Main Street on your side?

— Cynthia H. Craft

Quotables.....

"Race is just kind of silly anyway because 99 percent of our DNA is the same."

— Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, after a reporter queried the mayor on racial inequities worsened by gentrification.

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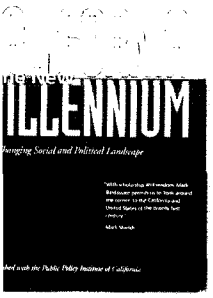
Excerpts: From the Bookshelf

California in the New Millennium
By Mark Baldassare
University of California Press

Perhaps all we need to say about this volume is that the press release accompanying it is adorned by laudatory remarks from such familiar political voices as George Skelton, Mark Shields, Bill Schneider, Peter Schrag, Bruce Cain and (our very own) Sherry Bebitch Jeffe. Needless to say, everyone heralds it as essential reading.



Author Mark Baldassare, a well-known and well-regarded pundit, pollster and senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, gives us a snapshot of a state in transition. Our golden state, says Baldassare, is experiencing such rapid change that, a mere half-century from now, we will be hard-pressed to recognize the place in which we live today.

"California in the New Millennium" has all the data to back up the author's contention. Its 283 pages contain 57 tables and charts detailing survey results that touch on such pulse-points as voters' trust (or should we say mistrust?) in government, interest in politics, tolerance for TV campaign commercials and so forth. Culling from the results, Baldassare pieces together a portrait of fluidity.

One topic Baldassare probes is the sway that television commercials hold on the electorate. He found that voters were reduced by a lack of TV political news coverage to gathering election-year information from paid TV ads. "When you ask Californians about the elections, they talk about the television commercials." One San Francisco respondent actually reported making a choice for governor "because the television commercial stuck in my head." Meanwhile, other voters expressed less of a connection to political parties and reported making Election Day decisions on their stances on the issues instead. These independents are the fastest-growing group of voters since 1970, Baldassare reports.

One of the best parts of the book is the appendix, which dryly lays out findings and methodology of the Public Policy Institute's focus groups and its April, May, September, October and December 1998 surveys, all of which, combined, offer preciously detailed, unvarnished clues as to what makes today's California voter tick.

— *Cynthia H. Craft*

By the numbers

Shaky all over

$2.53 billion Fines that state Dept. of Insurance staff said State Farm should pay for mishandling quake damage claims.

9 Fines that state Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush required State Farm to pay.

$157.7 million Payment to earthquake repayment fund that state Dept. of Insurance staff said State Farm should make.

1 Repayment fund payment that Quackenbush required State Farm to make.

$319 million Fines that Dept. of Insurance staff recommended 20th Century Insurance pay for mishandling claims.

$100,000 Portion of recommended fines that Quackenbush required 20th Century to pay.

3 Number of state government investigations of Quackenbush, including his acceptance of insurance company contributions.

Source: Los Angeles Times.

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LA police scandals don't compare to NYPD blues

by Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

Last March, Patrick Dorismond, an unarmed security guard, was fatally shot in an angry struggle with New York City plainclothes cops, who had approached Dorismond to ask him if he had drugs to sell.

Dorismond was the third unarmed black man shot by New York police officers in 13 months, according to press accounts. Each time, the shootings set off angry protests.

Last March in Los Angeles, cop Rafael Perez drew a light prison sentence for stealing cocaine from Los Angeles Police Department facilities, in exchange for exposing details of police misconduct in the LAPD's Rampart Division, which serves a large Latino immigrant population. Perez's allegations have led to the largest police corruption scandal in Los Angeles' history.

From September 1999 through late March, nearly 50 criminal convictions have been set aside in connection with the ongoing "Rampart" investigation. Also, more than two dozen cops have been fired, relieved of duty or have quit the force. The corruption probe has spread to at least three other LAPD divisions, where allegations of similiar police misconduct are under investigation.

What happened in Los Angeles is primarily about class and cultural divides.

But unlike the anger and emotion that spilled into the streets of New York, the largest public demonstration of Latino sentiment toward Ramparts, analyst Gregory Rodriquez reported, "was a pro-police rally in September last year."

Missing, too, is the rage that permeated L.A.'s black community in the wake of pro-police Rodney King-beating verdicts eight years ago. The most heated exchanges have been among L.A.'s civic and political leaders, who are lashing out against each other.

Early this year, LAPD Chief Bernard C. Parks accused the office of L.A. County District Attorney Gil Garcetti of dragging its feet on prosecuting allegedly dirty cops. Garcetti, currently in a tough re-election race, returned fire, calling the scandal the LAPD's "mess" and charging Parks and his investigators with failing to cooperate fully with the D.A.'s office. L.A. Mayor Richard Riordan, who appointed Parks as police chief, finally excoriated both Parks and Garcetti for "acting like children."

Meanwhile, back in New York, Police Commissioner Howard Safir explained, "If you look around the country, the complaints we hear in New York City are the same complaints that you hear in Louisville, Los Angeles and Miami and lots of other cities....This is about race — something we all have to face and something we all have to talk to each other about."

The "us against them" confrontations between New York cops and minorities may have been racially motivated. But what happened in Los Angeles, where the police chief is an African-American, and minorities were highly visible among both cops and criminals swept up in the Rampart scandal, is primarily about class and cultural divides.

L.A.'s dominant ethos — the long-ingrained civic culture that helped define the old, white Los Angeles and the multi-ethnic culture that is the city's future— forged the muted community response to Rampart.

There is a long-standing trust in — and support of — the LAPD, particularly among Anglo residents of the city. A *Los Angeles Times* poll taken last year showed that nearly two-thirds of city residents approved the job that LAPD was doing; in the San Fernando Valley, 74 percent of the respondents approved.

Similarly, the city's new immigrants, writes Rodriquez, "do not harbor deep distrust of or disdain for government, including its most visible institution, the police." Because U.S. Latinos generally do not view race as "the primary means of social organization and identity," it is not a significant social issue for them, according to Rodriquez. Therefore, "a police-misconduct case will not necessarily have racial overtones for them."

Some dismiss the lack of outrage over Rampart as emblematic of the "peculiar anomaly" that is laid-back LaLa Land. Hardly. It is a manifestation of life in a post-modern city bereft of a central core, both energized and paralyzed by its diversity. It is fodder for Hollywood scriptwriters. But unlike "L.A. Confidential," the movie version of police corruption, the Rampart saga will not have a Hollywood ending.

Contributing editor Sherry Bebitch Jeffe teaches at the Claremont Graduate University. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

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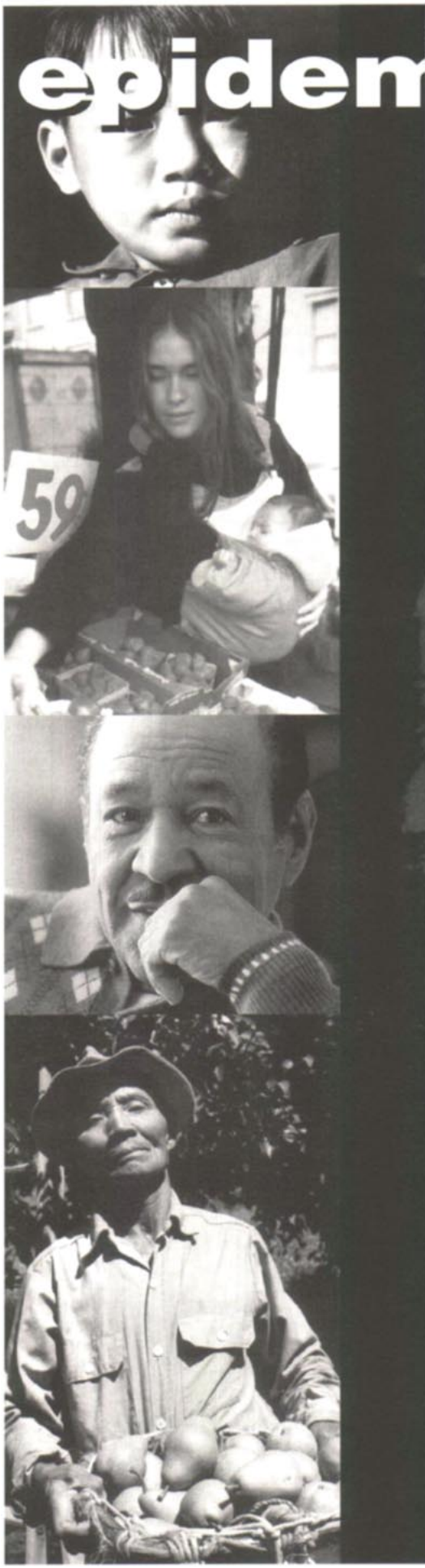
Health-care epidem



California is on an economic roll. Yet every day, thousands more join the ranks of the uninsured. Against this stark backdrop, critics ask: Is the Legislature up to the task of tackling this dilemma?

by Emelyn Rodriguez

It's a growing epidemic that, according to one estimate, spreads to 70,000 more Californians each month — an astounding 2,333 people a day. Experts around the state call it a "health care crisis." And each year, it costs government, taxpayers and businesses hundreds of millions of dollars in emergency room visits and lost productivity.

Despite California's booming economy, the number of people without any form of health insurance continues to skyrocket. The Golden State is now home to a disproportionate number of Americans without health insurance: 7.3 million Californians — or one in six of the country's uninsured.

This troubling trend comes at a time of record economic prosperity, low unemployment and heightened concern

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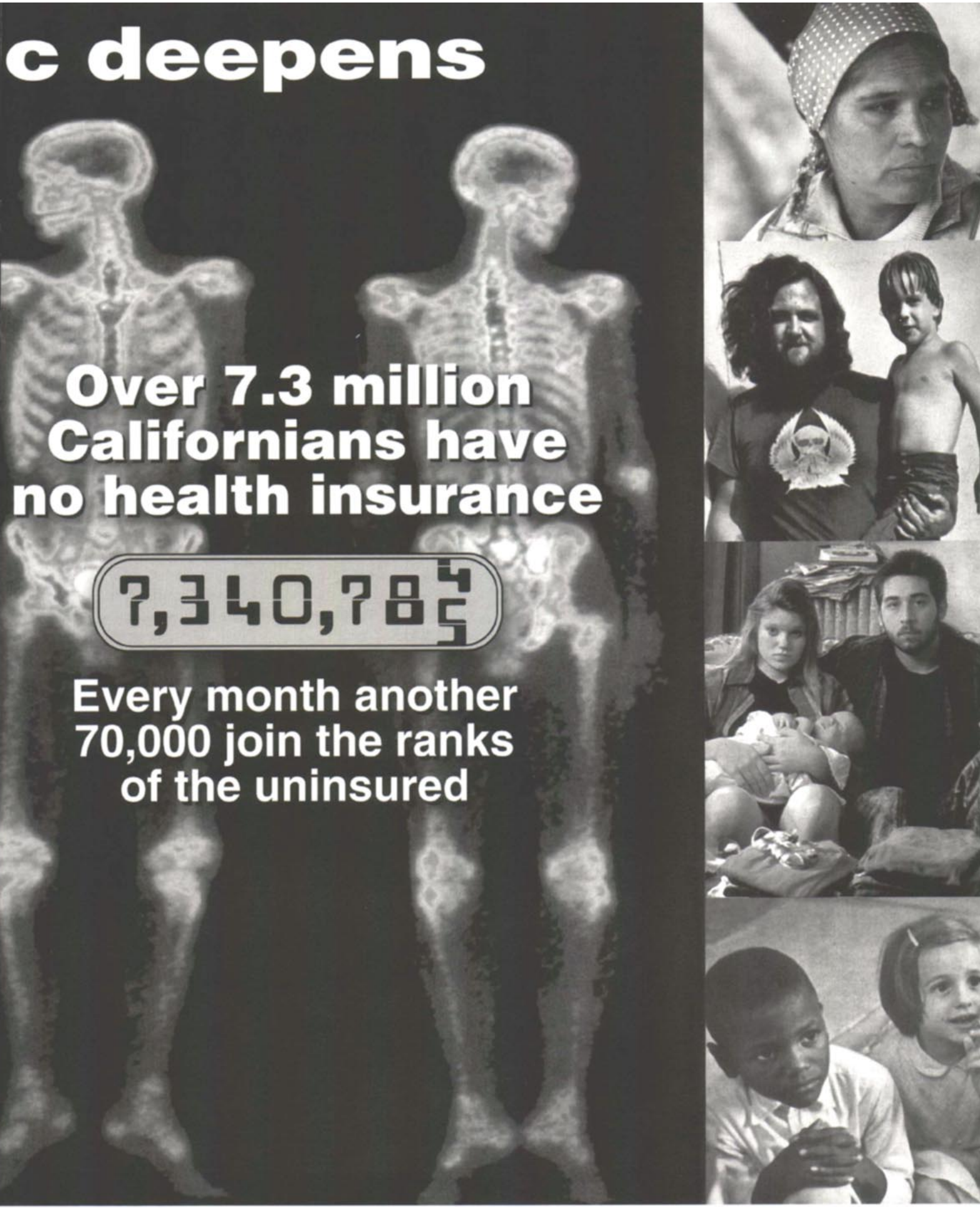
c deepens
Over 7.3 million Californians have no health insurance
7,340,785
Every month another 70,000 join the ranks of the uninsured

Sources: The State of Health Insurance in California, 1999. Published by the Regents of the University of California, January 2000 and American College of Emergency Physicians.

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among Californians that too many people, especially children, lack access to basic health services.

"When a quarter of your population is uninsured, I think that's a disaster," said state Senator Jackie Speier (D-Hillsborough), chairwoman of the Senate Insurance Committee. "The health care system of California is on the brink of destruction. And we've got to get serious about repairing it and rehabilitating it."

Lawmakers, however, are a long way from any real solution, despite the cushion of a massive state budget surplus. Universal coverage "probably won't happen soon," Speier said. "It's not even on the screen at this point, although there is a tremendous amount of discussion."

Yet everyone agrees that the relentless rise of the uninsured population is one of the most pressing problems facing the state health care system. Just ask the state's emergency room doctors who estimate that anywhere from 20 percent to 40 percent of their walk-in patients have no health coverage. Or advocates for the state's working poor, who make up the vast majority of the uninsured. Or even insurance groups that now eagerly endorse legislative measures seeking to contain the exploding problem.

California residents are also weighing in. In a recent Field Poll commissioned by the nonprofit research group California Health Care Foundation, respondents cited health care as their No. 2 concern — after education — in the upcoming 2000 elections. The survey showed Latinos have the highest rates of uninsured (40 percent) and affordable health care registered as their top priority. More than one in three Latinos have never had health insurance.

"Latinos have a high concentration in industries that do not provide health insurance as a fringe benefit, such as the service and agricultural industries," said Carlos Rodriguez, coordinator with the nonprofit Latino Coalition for a Healthy California. "It will definitely continue to be an issue that will affect the choices that Latinos will make during the upcoming election."

Providing sick children with medical care regardless of ability to pay and ensuring all California children have access to basic services — such as routine checkups and vaccinations — emerged as top health priorities among voters, according to the survey. Next, those surveyed wanted to make sure Medicare is financially viable and that seniors have access to affordable prescription drugs.

Political paralysis

Yet lack of consensus — or vision — on the issue has produced near political paralysis on both the state and federal levels. Since the high-profile demise of President Clinton's sweeping 1994 universal health insurance plan, skittish lawmakers have shifted their focus to more "incremental reforms," or efforts that merely tweak the current system.

"The health care system of California is on th got to get serious about repairing

Last year, for instance, California lawmakers tackled the problem by passing bills that largely expanded existing programs. They increased eligibility and began simplifying the application process for Medi-Cal, the state's publicly funded insurance program for the poor, and for Healthy Families, a state and federally funded low-cost health plan for California children. They also approved a bill establishing a task force to examine options for universal health coverage and report back to the Legislature by 2001.

Current proposals generally build on past reforms. They include measures to further expand and reform Medi-Cal and Healthy Families by increasing qualifying income levels and offering coverage to parents of children who qualify. There are also various proposals for tax credits for individuals who purchase insurance policies for themselves or employers who buy them for employees.

Perhaps most ambitious of the measures is Speier's bill, SB2020, which aims to provide health coverage for all California children. It proposes, among other things, further expanding eligibility for Healthy Families to those with incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (or $51,150 for a family of four); basing premiums on a yet-to-be determined sliding scale; and requiring hospitals to enroll eligible newborn children in Healthy Families or Medi-Cal prior to discharge. Of the 2 million uninsured children in California, about 1.5 million are eligible but not enrolled for government programs.

"It's a bold and real way that we can get to insuring all the children in California, with everyone pitching in — taxpayers, health plans and communities," Speier said. "We're creating new portals through which they can be enrolled."

None of the current proposals, however, even come close to approaching the all-inclusive, comprehensive system of health care that many believe is needed to solve the problem and has so far been elusive at both the state and federal levels.

"These approaches are incremental," said Assemblyman Martin Gallegos (D-Baldwin Park), chairman of the Assembly Health Committee, who is carrying a bill to expand a state insurance program for "high-risk" indi-

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viduals, those with pre-existing medical conditions who were denied coverage by insurance carriers. "If we take all the proposals together and cumulatively calculate the coverage, we're looking at covering 3 million of the uninsured," said Callegos. "Clearly, the true solution in dealing with the uninsured is universal health coverage. But for political reasons, cost considerations, I don't foresee universal health care becoming a reality any time soon."

rink of destruction. And we've nd [illegible] it."
— state Senator Jackie Speier

No easy fix

Even those who support comprehensive health coverage say that any significant reform is bound to be complicated, costly and controversial. With options ranging from a government-run program to the current "free market" approach, any proposal will stir up opponents whose interests lie with the status quo.

And there are other obstacles besides competing interests (patients, doctors, hospitals, HMOs, insurance companies) fervently guarding their sliver of the pie. Even in good economic times, health care competes for funding and attention with other significant social issues, such as education, transportation and public safety.

Governor Gray Davis has already declared education as his top priority and it is unclear — if not unlikely — he will support major health care reforms this year, especially if it means raising taxes. And in an election year when voters are generally satisfied with the way things are, politicians are not inclined to make waves with new — and politically risky — proposals.

But some believe that the problem has not received its fair share of attention — or effort — in the halls of state government because it primarily affects the poor and the disenfranchised — groups less likely to vote and otherwise weigh in as constituents.

"I think universal health care is a realistic goal in California. Whether there's political will to do it is another question," said E. Richard Brown, one of the authors of a sweeping study of the uninsured and director of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. "If the uninsured were not lower income, we'd be more likely to do it. But these are people who don't have strong political voices and unfortunately, they are the ones who are at highest risk."

Michael Dimmitt, lobbyist for the California Health Care Association, agrees that political will, not technical know-how, is what's sorely lacking and delaying progress.

"The technical aspects of it are not an issue," said Dimmitt, whose group represents more than 700 hospitals, health systems, physicians and health care entities in the state. "The question is what is the elective leadership of this state willing to do, when are they willing to do it and how much money are they willing to put into it... We've been hoping to see universal health care coverage in the near future for the last 50 years. Unfortunately, I think it has to become a middle-class issue and by and large the middle class has access to health care."

Brown's research indicates that 6 million of the state's uninsured are in working families. Those more likely to be uninsured include young adults (39 percent), Latinos (40 percent) and other minorities, as well as noncitizens, half of whom have no insurance. Other surveys indicate that many uninsured workers switch jobs frequently, work part-time or are contract employees. Many work in the manufacturing, service and retail industries. One in three told researchers they did not seek medical care when they needed it in 1999 because of the cost.

Life without health care

It's a way of life that 28-year-old Sara Davis from San Francisco knows too well. She makes about $15,000 a year sewing drapes for theaters. She describes her seasonal work as "feast or famine." Sometimes she makes an additional $10,000 each year working for production and stage companies.

Davis has not had health insurance since she was 16 because she can't afford it. She worries constantly about where she will get health care since a nearby free clinic closed down. Her 24-year-old brother, who worked on oil-drilling rigs, couldn't afford insurance either. Last year, he killed himself after a long battle with depression and migraines that worsened due to lack of medical attention. He left behind a wife and two young children.

"Health care is one of those sneaky little things that can catch up with you if you don't have a safety net," she said. "It's really one of the straws that can break a camel's back and it's especially brutal if you're already having a hard time (financially)."

In California, the surge in the uninsured can be traced back to 1996's welfare reform, which tightened eligibility requirements for public assistance to noncitizens and separated eligibility requirements for welfare and Medi-Cal. Many moved from welfare to low-end jobs that lacked benefits, unaware they could continue limited enrollment in Medi-Cal.

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Public sentiment is turning because "the economy is so good and yet health care is so terrible."

— Judy Spelman, Health Care for All-California

"Although families leaving welfare could remain eligible for transitional Medi-Cal, many were not informed of their eligibility and did not receive it," the UCLA report said.

"When we look carefully at the numbers, we see that people are falling out of the Medi-Cal program," said Brown, one of the report's authors. "When these people lose Medi-Cal, they're losing their health insurance. This accounts largely for the increase of the uninsured in the state and their growing numbers."

Meanwhile, the traditional ties between employment and health benefits frayed. Job-based and privately purchased insurance coverage remained flat from 1995 to 1998, the UCLA report said. California also had fewer companies offering health benefits to workers (58 percent compared to 69 percent nationally) and fewer than half of small firms (those with two to 50 employees) offered health benefits.

Simplifying the cumbersome Medi-Cal application process could also help keep many families insured, Brown said. Families are required to go through face-to-face interviews at welfare offices, fill out lengthy forms, provide extensive documentation and wait 45 days for approval. Because of the stigma and the bureaucratic barriers associated with Medi-Cal, the program has experienced a consistent decline in enrollment.

"It's too complicated for many families," he said. "We've created difficult hurdles for families to jump through."

As the ranks of the uninsured continue to grow, so do the "hidden" economic and medical costs, experts say. Relatively minor illnesses that go untreated often develop into major problems that require far more costly treatment, often at emergency rooms already packed with waiting patients.

Emergency room hell

"What's lacking is an understanding of how this crisis undermines the California economy," said Beth Capell, chief lobbyist for Health Access California, a consumer group. "People who don't have health insurance often spend an entire day in a county clinic or emergency room and they end up missing a whole day of work."

The impact is perhaps most keenly felt in the state's emergency rooms. Statewide, 19 financially strapped emergency rooms have closed since 1997 despite increased patient visits. One conservative estimate places the cost of treating the 840,000 to 1.8 million uninsured who walk into state emergency rooms each year at more than $500 million. Another places the cost at over $1 billion annually.

"The large number of uninsured is one of California's most glaring and embarrassing problems in health care," said Steve Thompson, chief lobbyist for the California Medical Association. "It's a serious problem in that not only do the uninsured not have access to preventative and routine care but when they have access to county services — at clinics and hospitals — they usually get care when they're really sick in emergency rooms, in the most expensive way possible."

Dr. Wesley Fields with the American College of Emergency Physicians said that state and federal laws ensure a person's access to emergency services. "It's basically structured as an unfunded mandate," he said. "We're really the last line of defense and what you've got here is a ticking

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1999-2000 edition

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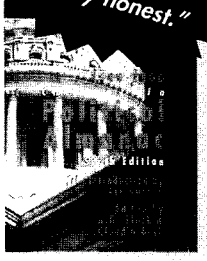

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time bomb. That's because access of all Californians to emergency care is increasingly unrelated to whether you have health insurance. The mismatch of services provided and dollars available has created a situation (in which) people with the wrong injury, at the wrong time, at the wrong place, may not get the medical care they need."

At a special state Senate hearing chaired by Speier in March, lawmakers called for swift action, including asking for additional emergency room funding in the state budget and possible creation of a "strike force" or panel to tackle the growing problem.

"It's an unmitigated disaster," Speier said, adding that "'ER' on TV is heaven. ER in California is hell."

In recent years, there has been growing clamor among different sectors — consumers, churches, labor groups, voters' organizations, lawmakers and the health industry — each calling for a solution to the mushrooming problem of the uninsured.

Last fall, Democratic presidential hopeful Bill Bradley energized national debate on the issue by making universal health coverage the cornerstone of his campaign. Even as the economy roared along, health care and the problem of the uninsured again emerged at the top of the "to do" list in the minds of voters.

"People feel it is not reasonable, that in a country as rich as ours, in economic times as good as they are now, that the issue of health coverage is going backward," said Mark Smith, president of California Health Care Foundation at a February press conference. "It was clear that simply waiting for good times to reduce the number of uninsured was not going to be effective."

Public sentiment is turning because "the economy is so good and yet health care is so terrible," said Judy Spelman, a member of Health Care for All — California, a group that advocates a government-run system of health delivery.

The group sponsored SB480, which was signed into law by Governor Gray Davis last year. It calls for Secretary of Health and Human Services Grantland Johnson to convene a task force to discuss options for universal health care and deliver a report to the Legislature by Dec. 1, 2001.

Assembly Republicans largely opposed the bill on grounds that it did not address the issue of astronomical costs, which they believe is at the heart of the uninsured problem.

"We believe that any study of this broad coverage for health care should identify the problem of cost, which is creating the huge population of uninsured" said state Assemblywoman Patricia Bates (R-Laguna Nigel), vice chair of the Assembly Health Committee, who is carrying a health insurance tax credit bill for Assembly Republicans. "It was trying to solve the symptom, not the sickness."

The problem is a bipartisan issue, Bates stressed, and one of the most critical problems facing the state and the rest of the nation. "It's something we need to get around the table on, roll up our sleeves and get to solving."

What is clear is that California can do better. Granted, no state has successfully enacted universal health coverage for all residents and California has significantly greater challenges due to its large immigrant communities (and state and federal restrictions on funding care to recent immigrants). However, some states have better track records. Among them, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Washington, Oregon and New York have significantly reduced their numbers of uninsured residents, mostly by expanding existing programs or creating new ones, prodding eligible persons to enroll and, most significantly, taking greater advantage of available federal funds.

These are things that lawmakers, if motivated, can easily do in California, said Bobby Pena, spokesman for the California Association of Health Plans. "If there's a crisis in health care in California, it's that we've got 7.3 million uninsured and many qualify for existing programs, especially children who are uninsured but eligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families. That's a no-brainer."

The current climate in Sacramento presents an extraordinary opportunity to turn the tide, said Lucien Wulsin, director of the Santa Monica-based Insure the Uninsured Project.

After all, California has a $9 billion budget surplus, a healthy economy, unspent federal funding and its first undivided government in 16 years, he said.

"It's up to state lawmakers and the governor to figure out the possibilities," he said.

Emelyn Rodriguez is senior editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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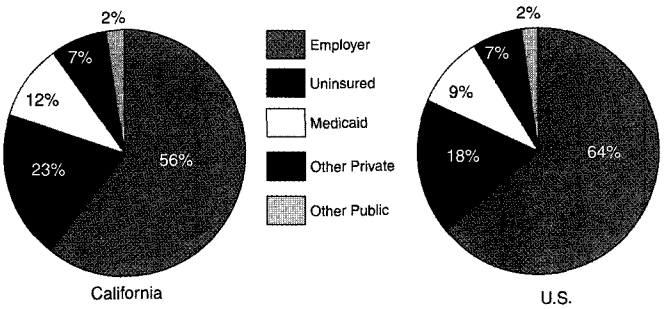
California insurance data:
Tracking the uninsured

Heath care facts

▶ In 1998, approximately 7.3 million Californians — 24% of the population under the age of 65 — had no public or private health insurance coverage. Nationally, 44.3 million (17%) were uninsured.

Insurance Coverage:
Persons under age 65, 1995-97



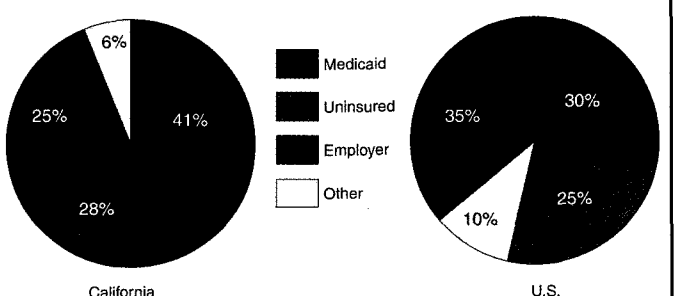
▶ 82% of California's uninsured — 6 million men, women, and children — were members of working families in 1998.

▶ In 1998, 40% of Latinos, 23% of African Americans, 22% of Asians and 15% of whites in California were uninsured.

▶ 40% of California's uninsured have been without health coverage at least five years.

▶ 58% of the uninsured in California cited the high cost of buying insurance as a very important reason for not having coverage.

Insurance Coverage:
Children under age 19 and family income below 200% of the federal poverty level , 1995-1997



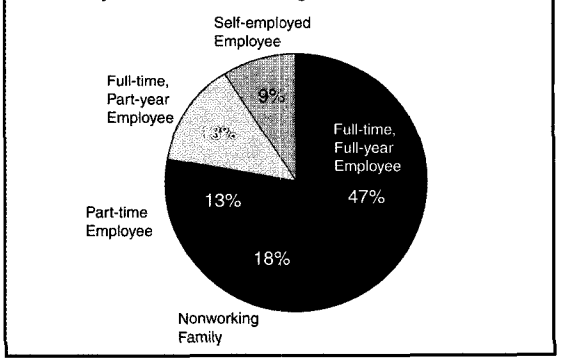
▶ Insurance status is highly correlated with income: of California's uninsured, 69% were under 200% of the federal poverty level, 16% were between 200 and 299%, and 15% were at or above 300% of the federal poverty level, which is $16,400 for a family of four.

▶ In 1998, more than 2 million children were without health insurance, up from 1.85 million in 1997.

▶ In 1998, 21% of children in California were uninsured compared to 15% nationally. Four in 10 uninsured California children live below the poverty level.

▶ In 1998, Latino children had the highest uninsurance rates of children in California (32%) and the lowest rate of coverage through job-based insurance (38%).

Uninsured Californians:
Family work status, ages 0-64, 1998



▶ California has one of the highest managed care penetration rates in the country. In 1997 nearly 21 million (45%) Californians were enrolled in HMOs.

Sources: State Health Facts, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2000; The State of Health Insurance in California, 1999; 2000 Healthcare Almanac, Faulkner and Grey; Office of Statewide Planning and Development, California Department of Finance.

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Tribal teen pregnancies raise red flags

Once considered an epidemic among girls, teenage pregnancy has dropped 22 percent in the last eight years, according to the state Health and Human Services Agency.

But hidden in that glowing statistic is a troubling trend: Births to Native American teens have been rising, giving them the dubious distinction of being the only ethnic or racial group in the state to see an increase in teen pregnancy.

California teenagers are having fewer babies. That's the good news. But Native Americans are the one exception.

By Farrah M. McDaid

"It's a crisis situation with Native Americans," said Anna Ramirez, interim chief for the Office of Family Planning at the Department of Health Services. "The health status of Native Americans is pretty poor, and they are at higher risk for social and psychological health factors. We are very concerned about them."

In 1998 alone, Native American teens ages 15-19 had 6.4 percent more children than the previous year, with nearly 40 babies born to every 1,000 Indian teenagers. And their birth rate is expected to swell again this year, according to the state's Health and Human Services Agency.

By contrast, in the same time period, white teenage girls had 5.3 percent fewer births, African Americans had 8.7 percent fewer and Hispanics 6.2 percent fewer.

Those numbers marked the first time in recent years that California's teenage birth rates have dropped below the national average. When state Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Grantland Johnson proudly made

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Native American teens today find themselves caught between the ideals of the modern, government-sanctioned white world and the age-old traditions and practices of California's native people.

that announcement last year, he credited the stunning decline to an aggressive, state-funded education and prevention effort. Programs included community outreach, a $20 million grant program to foster responsible parenting, and an $8.5 million media campaign that plastered billboards from Eureka to San Diego with ads promoting pregnancy prevention and responsibility.

"These programs have greatly contributed to California's declining teen birth rate," said Johnson. "The message is clear: these programs work." That is, unless you're a Native American teenager.

A unique history

The state is not alone in its concern as nearly 20 local, tribal and federal agencies continue to grapple with a health issue that, like alcoholism and diabetes, seems to be chronic within the Native American population.

The issue is further complicated by the nature of the Native American population as a whole: An extremely diverse yet small population — numbering around 300,000 — that brings a different history and set of social assumptions to the table.

"With anything in Indian health, the cause can be cultural or historical," said Sam Wilburn, coordinator of the State Indian Health Program, which helps fund Indian health clinics throughout California. "It can be traced directly back to the displacements of families."

Wilburn is referring to the infamous — and infamously brutal — relocation of hundreds of thousands of Indian families to remote reservations at the turn of the last century, courtesy of the U.S. government's containment policy. The relocation effort and ensuing reservation system spawned a vicious cycle of rural Indian poverty and a leeriness on the part of Native Americans toward anything sanctioned or introduced by government officials.

"The underlying distrust of anything the government has to offer comes from their slaughter 200 years ago," said Shelley Zimmer, Community Health Director at the Sacramento Urban Indian Health Project, Inc. "They don't automatically trust you."

And if the population does not trust the message put forth by government — namely, that getting pregnant as a teen is not desirable — then nothing will change. That's a reality Michon Eben, a youth activities coordinator at the Indian Education Center near Redding, knows only too well.

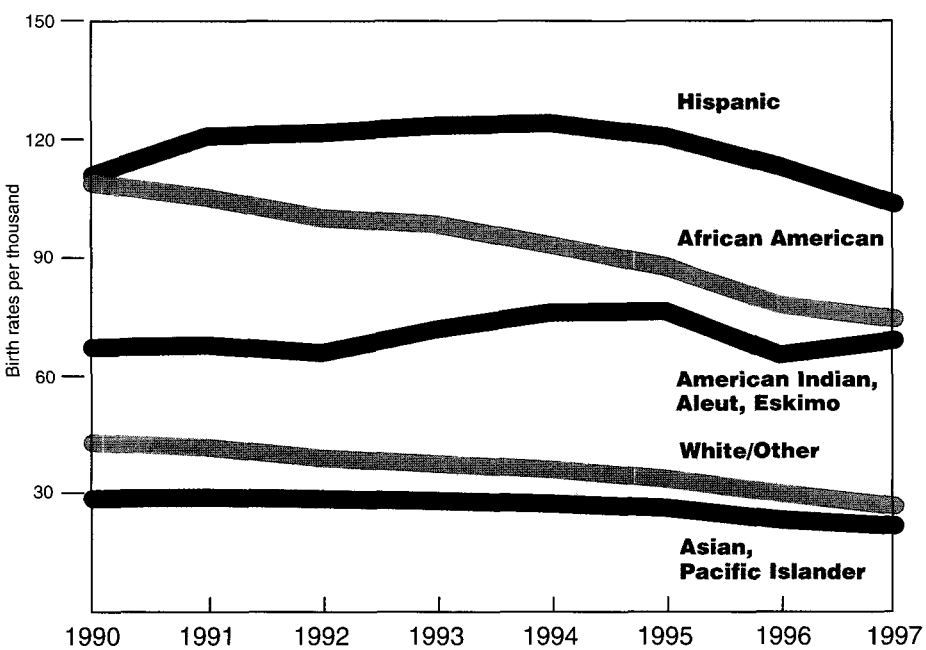
"Low self-esteem and not being educated about sex causes a lot of problems," she said. "I grew up with a generation of parents raised in white boarding schools, where you don't talk about sex because it's dirty. The risks of not educating kids about this are very high."

At a cultural crossroads

Native American teens today find themselves caught between the ideals of the modern, government-sanctioned white world and the age-old traditions and practices of California's native people.

Native American birth rates continue to rise

Teen birth rates continue to shrink in California for every group but Native Americans, who saw a 6 percent increase in teen births in 1998.



Source: California Health and Human Services Agency

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"Young girls see sex glamorized everywhere and, in a traditional society, they would be adults already," said Eben. "Teenagers have been having children for thousands of years."

Jim Crouch, executive director of the California Rural Indian Health Board, a nonprofit agency that funds a consortium of tribally operated health programs, says state and federal efforts to curb teen pregnancy overlook the importance of Native American culture and are therefore doomed to failure.

"For Native Americans, pregnancy is not a sickness or a disease, it's a naturally occurring event. In some communities, every baby that has a baby is a problem, but in this population, having a baby is (only) sometimes a problem. It's how life goes on, it's the next generation of the tribe, a blessed event."

Today, the Native American population in California is swelling to once again match the number of Indians who lived here prior to 1848.

While the Indian teen population is small — roughly 30,000 Indians are between the ages of 10 and 19 — their numbers are straining a health system that is already struggling to meet basic Indian health needs.

"Over half the people in our tribal health program are under the age of 19," said Crouch. "The message is just not getting out. We have an extremely high percentage of girls who come into the clinics for the first time during their third trimester."

Falling through the cracks

Crouch and others say that the crux of the problem lies with the nature of Indian health care in California — a patchwork collection of state, local and federal agencies that, despite their best efforts, fail to reach too many young Indians before they fall through the cracks of teen pregnancy.

Such agencies, like the California Rural Indian Health Board, the Sacramento Urban Indian Health Project and the California State Indian Health program, are primarily funded by the federal government, which allots nearly $100 million in funds each year for Indian health services in California. The state adds about $5 million more to the effort, but Barbara Beller, tribal government resource specialist for CRIHB, estimates it'll take another $86 million to bring Indian health care up to par with other health care systems.

"California is so far behind," said Beller. "We don't have Indian hospitals like some states, and Indians here receive about one-third the dollars for health care as Indians in other states."

Most tribal clinics offer free, basic health care services, including dental and eye care. But beyond that, Indians in search of outpatient medical care and access to specialists are out of luck. Both Beller and Crouch contend that the lack of health services and ability to respond to health crises such as teen pregnancy through community outreach programs could both be

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vastly improved with the right amount of funding.

"You can't expect an equity of health outcomes unless you have equality of financial inputs. We have the infrastructure and the clinics to foster more community outreach programs, but funding is the key," said Crouch.

A shining example of the success of community outreach programs can be found in Shasta Lake City, 12 miles north of Redding. Four years ago, the Local Indians For Education group won a Community Challenge Grant and created a youth "talking circle" program. The gender-specific talking circles, which are separated into boys' and girls' groups, meet twice a month and allow Indian teens to discuss social and personal issues, such as teen pregnancy. Youth services coordinator Michon Eben also includes lectures on birth control, abstinence and interactive games such as "Sexual Jeopardy," which provides information on sexual health issues.

"Kids are gonna do what they're gonna do and we can't be with them 24 hours a day," said Eben. "But we can educate them about birth control and empower them to make good choices."

Remarkably, not one girl has become pregnant in the surrounding community since the talking circles were created, according to Eben.

Strings attached

Efforts like these, however, rarely receive funding without strings attached, according to both Eben and Crouch.

"Abortion is the big one," said Eben. "We're not ever allowed to go to Planned Parenthood — we just visit other health programs."

In fact, all 12 of the state's rural Indian health clinics and all other health programs affiliated with the federal Indian Health Services that receive federal dollars are barred from providing or talking about abortion.

"The IHS is prohibited from funding abortion services and can't talk about family planning," said Crouch.

The abortion prohibition represents yet another hole in the threadbare fabric of Indian health services and reinforces the scattershot nature of efforts to prevent teen pregnancies among Native Americans.

To date, Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante and several lawmakers, including Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin (D-Duncan Mills), whose district contains more tribes than any other in the state, have expressed an interest in boosting state spending on Indian health matters.

But, despite these heady times of budget surpluses and successful gambling initiatives, Beller, the tribal liaison and lobbyist for the rural Indian health board, concedes it's an uphill battle.

"Just because Proposition 1A passed, that doesn't mean everything is OK," she said. "Girls are still getting pregnant."

Farrah McDaid is assistant editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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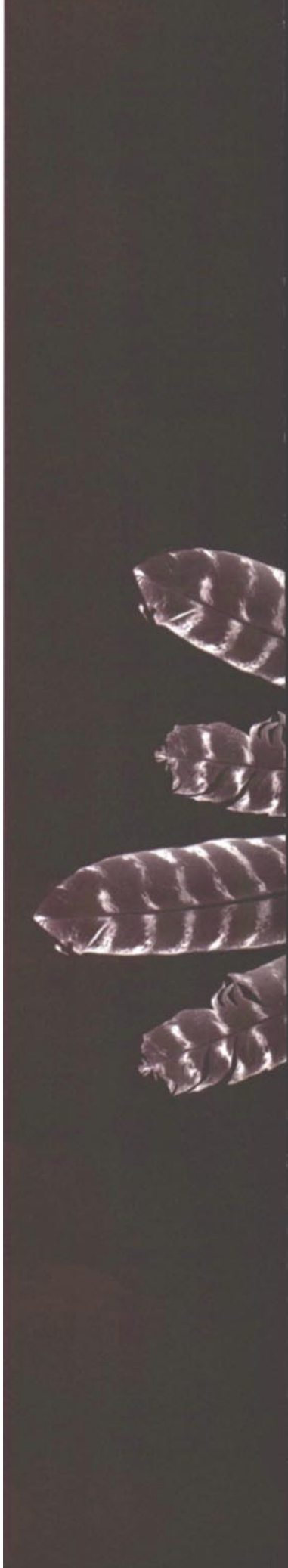
The Strangest of Bedfellows



The mighty prison guards' union has teamed up with three of California's wealthiest Indian tribes to influence some of the state's most critical election campaigns. The intriguing question is: "Why?"

by Noel Brinkerhoff

In 1988, a Chino prison guard was killed when a juvenile inmate he was escorting to a Los Angeles hospital for medical treatment tried to escape. Like other correctional officers killed in the line of duty, the veteran officer left behind a grieving family. But unlike the others, his death had an unintended political consequence. It wound up bringing together two people who, 12 years later, helped create one of the most intriguing and powerful alliances in California politics.

The two sides in this unlikely marriage are the politically savvy prison guards' union — known as the California Correctional Peace Officers Association or CCPOA — and three of the wealthiest Indian gambling tribes

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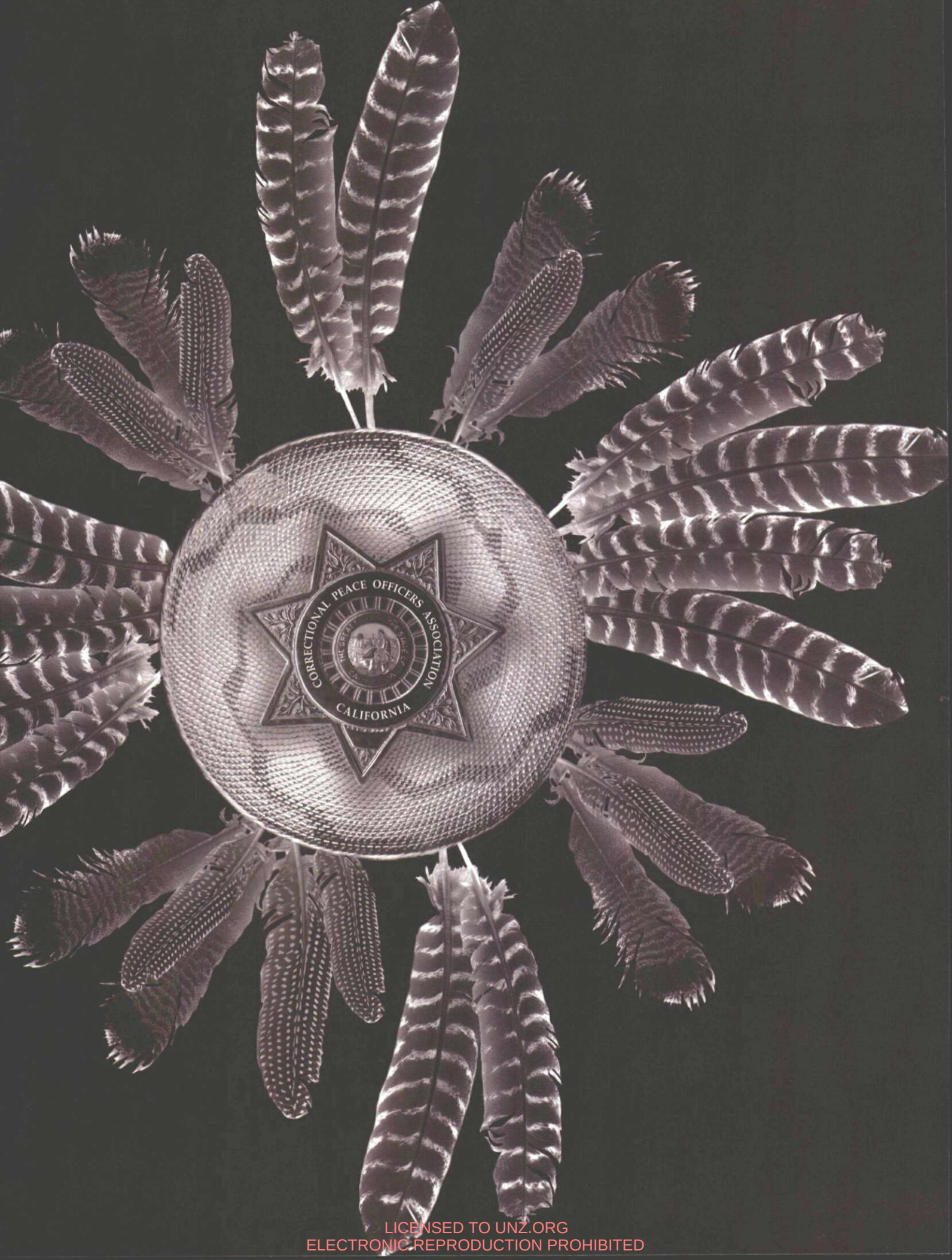

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The merger brings together CCPOA's well-establishe of the shrewdest players in state elections wi inexperienced, but substantial money power of the thre

in the state: the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians.

This political joint venture is intriguing for a number of reasons. What common ground would cause two such seemingly disparate interests to join forces? And what impact will the combined characteristics of the alliance have on California politics?

The merger brings together CCPOA's well-established reputation as one of the shrewdest players in state elections with the raw, relatively inexperienced, but substantial money power of the three tribes.

And it offers a campaign war chest that potentially reaches into the tens of millions of dollars, guided by a man recognized as one of the sharpest political operators in California politics today: Don Novey, CCPOA's president for the past 20 years.

Yet when it comes to discussing this political powerhouse, very few insiders claim to know anything about it or its political action committee: the Native Americans & Peace Officers PAC, or NAPO. In interviews with more than a dozen key people who make it their business to know about entities like NAPO, almost none could provide any details, publicly or privately. In addition, a number of participants were contacted repeatedly about the alliance and never responded to queries — including tribal officials inside and outside of NAPO.

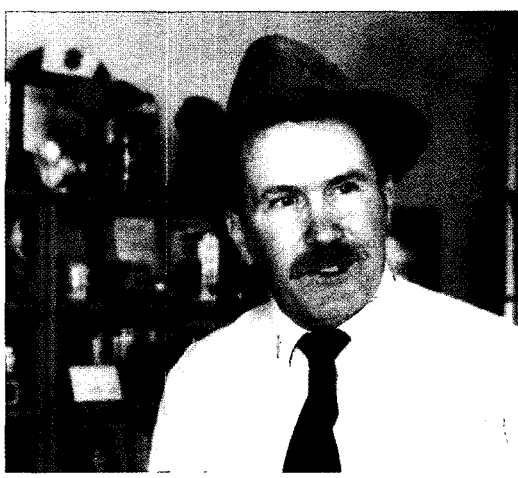
But in interviews with Novey and two of the tribal participants it's clear that these two distinctly different entities have found a common purpose when it comes to playing in elections — a purpose that is as multi-dimensional as Novey's reputed chess-like knack for political strategizing.

Who are Those Guys?

When Les Macarro, a Luiseno Indian correctional officer, was killed 12 years ago while trying to apprehend his escaped prisoner, his family suddenly found itself both emotionally and financially devastated. Macarro's wife, Martha, was unable to work following her husband's death, leaving her and the couple's four children in dire straits. But thanks in part to Novey's efforts, the family's financial situation stabilized when it received money from a fund for relatives of peace officers killed in the line of duty. The family's oldest child, Mark, never forgot that help.

"It was a tremendous boon at the time," says Mark Macarro, who went on to become chairman of his tribe, the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians, and the most visible and arguably the most powerful Native American during the recent Proposition 1A and Proposition 5 ballot battles over Indian gambling.

Indian gambling, in fact, was what caused Macarro and Novey's paths to cross again years after Les Macarro's death. Unable to make any inroads with then-Governor Pete Wilson in the state's long-simmering legal battle over use of Nevada-style slot machines in Indian casinos, Macarro contacted Novey, who was on good terms with the governor after Novey's union had given more than $2 million to Wilson's two gubernatorial elections. Novey also was contacted by Viejas chairman Anthony Pico for the same reasons. Although Novey was unable to resolve the dispute between the tribes and Wilson, he established a relationship with the tribal leaders that continued to grow. By 1998, things solidified to the point where the two tribes, along with a third, the Morongos, agreed to establish a joint political action committee with the CCPOA.



Don Novey, president of California Correctional Peace Officers Association.

To appreciate the potential that NAPO has as a political force, consider what each side brings to the table. For the tribes, it's cash. *Lots* of cash. They've also acquired a heavy blanket of public sympathy through their campaigns for Propositions 5 and 1A. Although more than 40 California tribes operate casinos on their reservations, the three NAPO tribes are among the biggest spenders when it comes to contributing to state politicians and campaigns. According to spending reports from January 1998 through February 2000, the three tribes spent a combined $36 million on candidates and ballot initiatives.

And then there's CCPOA. A key player in legislative and gubernatorial campaigns for more than 10 years, the union under Novey's leadership has learned to successfully play both sides of the political aisle — having supported

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What Beneficiaries Say About the Medi-Cal Program

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Most beneficiaries appreciate Medi-Cal...

- 92% say that Medi-Cal is a good program.
- 84% agree that "Medi-Cal is worth the hassle because of what you get in return."

...And most are pleased with the coverage provided by Medi-Cal.

- 84% believe that Medi-Cal covers most of the medical services people need.
- 52% say they get preventive care or other services that they did not get without Medi-Cal.
- 88% of former beneficiaries who now have private insurance agree that Medi-Cal covers necessary services, suggesting that Medi-Cal coverage is comparable to private insurance.

"Medi-Cal actually covers better [than private insurance] on certain things."

▪ White adult, Fresno

- Among the services covered by Medi-Cal, beneficiaries believe that improving coverage for dental care (22%) and prescription drugs (19%) are the most important priority.

However, many beneficiaries are confused about their coverage and have difficulty getting the information they need.

- 61% say it is difficult to determine which services and medications Medi-Cal covers.
- Those who have trouble understanding what Medi-Cal covers are less likely to say they are very satisfied with their experience in Medi-Cal than those who do not have trouble understanding the coverage rules (42% vs. 55%).

Access & Quality of Care

Most beneficiaries believe the quality of care in Medi-Cal is high...

- 80% say that Medi-Cal provides high quality medical services.

...But most also believe that quality and access need to be improved.

- Although 76% say they prefer to receive care in a doctor's office, only 49% report that this is their usual place for care. By contrast, 17% say that they prefer to receive care in a clinic, but 40% report a clinic as their usual place for care. The remainder report the emergency room or other location as their usual (11%) or preferred (7%) place for care.
- Half report difficulty finding doctors (56%) or dentists (53%) who will see Medi-Cal patients.
- 72% say improving quality of care is a very important improvement to make to the program, and 78% say getting more doctors in the program is very important.

Eligibility & Enrollment

Most beneficiaries are frustrated by the process required to obtain and keep their coverage...

- 92% say that making the process of signing up for Medi-Cal easier is an important improvement for the program.
- 78% believe that too much paperwork and documentation are required to enroll.
- 72% say that too much paperwork and documentation are required to remain enrolled or get recertified.

"The forms are too complicated. You have to be a specialist to fill out those forms because there is a lot of difficult terminology."

▪ Cantonese adult, Oakland

"Medi-Cal kept cutting us off for no re

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Medi-Cal: Listening to the Voice of the Consumer

HISTORICALLY, FEW GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS HAVE PAID MUCH attention to the consumer's experience. This is especially true of entitlement programs, in general, and welfare and Medicaid, in particular. But families are not simply passive recipients of services. When it comes to their health care, they make decisions—such as whether to enroll in Medi-Cal or whether to use costly emergency room care—based on rational choices and preferences. These decisions can have a profound impact on the Medi-Cal program's effectiveness and costs.

Fortunately, a new order of business is sweeping through government in California and elsewhere. Public agencies as diverse as the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Motor Vehicles are adopting private sector attitudes about the importance of providing better customer service. In the process, these agencies are recognizing the need to better understand their customers.

To gain a better understanding of Medi-Cal customers' experiences with the program, the Medi-Cal Policy Institute sponsored the first-ever statewide survey of current and former beneficiaries. The Institute hopes this information can help inform the policies and priorities of the program and shed light on the design of other health care products to best address the needs of low-income Californians.

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About the Survey

This summary is based on the results of a statewide telephone survey of 2,402 current and recent Medi-Cal beneficiaries (adults or parents of enrolled children), conducted in August and September 1999. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish. In order to obtain greater insight on selected issues, the survey was supplemented with 11 focus groups of current and recent Medi-Cal beneficiaries conducted in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Cambodian in May, August, and September 1999. Recent beneficiaries were defined as those who were in the program at some point during the past 12 months (survey) or 24 months (focus groups). The margin of sampling error is +/- 3% points for the survey. Both the survey and the focus groups were conducted by Lake Snell Perry & Associates for the Medi-Cal Policy Institute. Lake Snell Perry & Associates is based in Washington D.C. and has conducted numerous qualitative and quantitative research projects with Medicaid and Medi-Cal beneficiaries. For more information about the survey, or to obtain the complete report *Speaking Out: What Beneficiaries Say About the Medi-Cal Program*, visit the Institute's Web site at **www.medi-cal.org**.

Seventy percent of Medi-Cal beneficiaries are registered to vote.

The **Medi-Cal Policy Institute**, established in 1997 by a grant from the California HealthCare Foundation, is an independent source of information on the Medi-Cal program. The Institute seeks to facilitate and enhance the development of effective policy solutions with the interests of Medi-Cal beneficiaries guiding this work. The Institute conducts and commissions research, distributes information about the program and its beneficiaries, highlights the program's successes, and identifies the challenges ahead.

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Medi-Cal *Policy Institute*

476 Ninth Street
Oakland, CA 94607
tel: 510/286-8976
fax: 510/238-1382
www.medi-cal.org

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both Democratic and Republican candidates. Picking winners is something for which Novey is known, including the last two gubernatorial victors: Republican Wilson and Democrat Gray Davis. The union also doesn't lack for its own cash, evidenced by its expenditure of $5.4 million over the last two years on various campaigns.

But with NAPO, Novey will be in a position to funnel even larger amounts into campaign coffers if the tribes continue to pony up. So far, Novey's union and the three tribes have poured $1.3 million into NAPO, most of that spent on a select number of key competitive races around the state (see chart, page 28).

Mine + Yours = Power²

Although the early personal connection between the tribes and Novey's CCPOA helps explain the formation of the alliance, it doesn't fully express all the possible political reasons for its existence. One is the nature of power politics, in which the building of coalitions brings added clout and strength to individual groups. "In politics, the more strategic alliances you are able to build, the stronger you become," says Republican consultant Ray McNally, who has worked with Novey for years.

Mark Macarro, Pechanga tribal chairman

Other reasons are more specific to each side. For the Indians, linking themselves with CCPOA makes perfect sense, given Novey's experience and track record in elections.

"You don't go very wrong in this town by taking a lead from Don Novey," said Democratic consultant David Townsend. "If I was a new emerging economic force in this town, it'd be smart politics to align myself with Novey."

CCPOA's connections with law enforcement groups also made an alliance important to the tribes. In their efforts to legalize Nevada-style slot machines for their casinos, tribal leaders needed the support of law enforcement because of arguments by gambling opponents that expanded Indian gaming would increase crime.

"Don [Novey] was part of the law enforcement community and the fact that Macarro had a close relationship with Novey, we made a decision to go in to start this PAC," said Pico.

And now, having won through passage of Proposition 1A in March the type of gambling operations they want, the tribes' alliance with CCPOA is a means of keeping what they have won. "Any political gains by definition, especially with term limits, have a way of being short-lived. We were exploring a means, a mechanism, of protecting those gains," said Macarro. "We're not in it for 'the game' — to have power as an end to itself .... It's important as we lay the economic groundwork that we also lay a political foundation to protect it."

For others, however, the tribes' decision to strengthen themselves signals an attempt to cut others out, such as owners of card rooms and horse tracks anxious to expand their own gambling operations. As one legislative source, who has worked with the tribes but asked not to be identified, put it: "Five years ago, these tribes were nothing. Now, they've basically cut themselves out a constitutional protection for huge gaming revenues, and the shift is now on closing the door on others who want to cash in. As long as they have a monopoly, they're going to have an interest in protecting that monopoly."

Novey, meanwhile, downplays the political nitty-gritty of why he's working with tribes, saying it's all about helping the new kids on the political block. "I know it sounds corny, but I think we put the royal screws to the American Indian," he says. "It goes back to the 1800s when we took away a lot of their lands and they were never compensated for it."

"It's the right thing to do," Novey adds, "helping them to help themselves."

That includes sharing with tribal leaders some of CCPOA's acquired knowledge, including lessons learned from past mistakes. Novey cites the time his union bestowed a $10,000 honorarium to then-Assemblywoman Sunny Mojonnier (R-San Diego) in 1988 for her support of CCPOA-backed legislation — a contribution that was criticized by some as heavy-handed. "We took some flack for that and probably rightfully so .... In politics, you make one major mistake and your dollar is dirty forever. I sure didn't want that to happen to [the Indians]."

Aw, shucks, t'aint nothin'

Although Novey brushes aside any self-interest in teaming with tribes, others point out that CCPOA also gains from such a relationship. Several election experts noted that the alliance will magnify the union's influence now that it is affiliated with one of the largest up-and-coming groups in the state. Plus, the PAC's joint pot of money allows CCPOA to help its friends without footing all of the bill. Consider Dave Cogdill, for example.

Running for the Republican nomination in the Modesto-based 25th Assembly District, Cogdill received $50,000 from NAPO a few weeks before the March 7 primary. The contribution was made even though Cogdill is an avowed opponent of gambling. CCPOA, meanwhile, thought well enough of Cogdill to cut a separate, union-only check for $25,000 to the former councilman. In essence, Novey was able to give Cogdill $75,000, with

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$50,000 coming from a joint account in which the Indians put up 75 percent of the money.

The joint war chest also can be useful in diluting the worries of those who might have trouble taking Indian gaming money but not prison guard money, and vice versa. "It gives the tribes a chance to participate without being the direct givers," said one political consultant who asked not to be identified. "It [the tribal money] mixes with law enforcement [money]."

There are potential pitfalls, though, in relying on a common pool of money. In the case of Cogdill, the NAPO contribution made the local papers, earning the former Modesto councilman some negative press for saying that he considered the PAC money a prison guard contribution, not an Indian gambling donation. The revelation, while embarrassing, did not hurt Cogdill at the polls, where he won the GOP nomination on March 7.

Cogdill provides an interesting example of the give-and-take decision-making process that NAPO leaders go through in deciding where to spend their money. Cogdill clearly was a CCPOA pick, while other NAPO recipients were chosen, in part, because of who they were running against — candidates whom Indians did not like. "Some were more germane to tribal interests and others more germane to CCPOA," says Macarro.

Macarro and Pico both concurred that Democrats Jack Scott and Amanda Susskind each received $100,000 from NAPO in their primary tussles for Senate and Assembly seats because their opponents — Democrats Scott Wildman and Paul Koretz, respectively — had angered tribal leaders for failing to support important Indian measures. Similar reasoning was behind NAPO's choice in backing Assemblymen Rico Oller, a Republican, and Ed Vincent, a Democrat, in their respective Senate races. Oller's GOP opponent was lobbyist R.K. "Skip" Daum, who, in Macarro's words, used tribal gaming as a "bludgeon" to attack Oller.

"We felt it was dumb and felt it was necessary to send a message," says Macarro. As for Vincent, his primary opponent was fellow Democratic Assemblyman Dick Floyd — one of the most openly hostile opponents of tribal gaming, according to Macarro. "That was a no- brainer that he had to be targeted."

When one considers the $40 million spent by NAPO in elections since 1998 — and notes the losses by NAPO targets such as Daun, Floyd and Wildman in the March primary, it's enough to give any politician pause about landing on NAPO's hit list. But that doesn't necessarily mean NAPO will wind up spending gargantuan amounts of money to lay waste to its opponents, according to Novey.

"The Indians have got to be cognizant of not spending too much money. The potential is there for a tribe to take half a million or even a million dollars and invest it in a legislative race, but it would stick out like a sore thumb," says Novey. "I come from the school of life where you don't scream and cajole your power, because it becomes diminished the more you try to exhibit it. We all wanted to go about this in a quiet way .... in a way to impact races that will help solidify the tribes within the political process ... to look professional and be professional about it."

Both Novey and Macarro say they intend to keep the alliance together for the long term. Unlike other interests that have linked up because of mutual interest in a specific piece of legislation or a statewide initiative campaign, the alliance between CCPOA and the tribes has no political expiration date. It was created, as Macarro put it, with the intention of being around a very long time, in order to secure the tribes' recent economic gains for future generations.

And it could become even bigger. Novey indicated that NAPO may expand to include additional tribes, including those beyond Southern California. "It's up to the three tribal leaders to expand the Central and Northern California [presence]. The possibility does exist [of others joining]."

Regardless, it's a political powerhouse that can't be ignored.

Native Americans & Peace Officers PAC

Money put into PAC by:	
Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians	$480,000
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	$435,000
Viejas Indian Reservation	$240,000
Calif. Correctional Peace Officers Assn.	$215,000
Total	**$1,370,000**
Money spent by PAC on:	
Gray Davis (D) ('98 governor's race)	$502,900[1]
Dave Cogdill (R) ('00 25th Assembly primary)	$50,000
Amanda Susskind (D) ('00 42nd Assembly primary)	$100,000
Rico Oller (R) ('00 1st Senate primary)	$50,000
Jack Scott (D) ('00 21st Senate primary)	$100,000
Ed Vincent (D) ('00 25th Senate primary)	$100,000
Former Leaders for an Effective Government[2]	$50,000
Total	**$952,900**

[1] Independent Expenditure
[2] PAC founded by Senate Democrats
Source: Information compiled from reports filed between January 1998 and February 2000 with the Secretary of State's Office.

Noel Brinkerhoff is associate editor of California Journal *and is editor of* California Capitol Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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PREMIUM INCREASES: THE FACTS, NOT THE MYTH

by Alan F. Holmer, President and CEO
Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America

In the headlines, on the talk shows, around kitchen tables and board rooms across the country, people are complaining about rising health insurance premiums. What's behind these premium increases? Although it may be tempting to round up the usual suspects and blame increased prescription drugs costs for the premium rises, the facts tell a different story.

According to the latest data on national health spending, total private health insurance premiums increased 8.2 percent in 1998. An analysis of these data shows that about 60 percent of this increase was due to increased spending on hospitals, physicians and other health care services, and only about a quarter of the increase reflected increased spending on prescription drugs. But although there are loud complaints about increased drug spending, you rarely hear anyone blaming premium increases on the fact that people are seeing their doctors more often.

A lot of other factors are driving premium increases. There's a strong labor market. That means that, in order to attract and keep top talent, employers are offering richer benefit packages. In addition, insurers are competing to meet growing consumer demand for less restrictive health plans and greater access to specialists and advanced medical technology – all of which add to health premium costs. There's also our aging population. Older patients go to the doctor more often, are hospitalized more often, have more chronic diseases and need more costly and intensive health care services than the younger population.

Increased spending on prescription drugs means that more people, under their doctor's supervision, are taking more and better medicines – and that's a good thing. It means that patients are benefiting from innovative and cost-effective new treatments. Last year alone, 40 new medicines were added to the nation's medicine cabinet. These include advances in the treatment of AIDS, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, Parkinson's and many other diseases. These and other medicines save lives and improve the quality of life for patients. In many cases, they also keep people out of hospitals and nursing homes, helping them avoid surgery.

1998 Health Insurance Premium Increases

2.3	+	4.8	+	1.1	=
Prescription Drugs		Physician, Hospital, Other Healthcare Services		Administrative Costs + Profits	

Source: The Lewin Group

Examples of such cost-effectiveness tradeoffs abound. In a year-long disease management program run by Humana Hospitals for about 1,100 patients with congestive heart failure, drug costs increased by 60 percent, while hospital costs declined by 78 percent. The net savings were $9.3 million. And the human savings were even greater: the patients' ability to perform the activities of daily living – a good indicator of quality of life – went up 15 percent, while the death rate fell 15 percent.

Employers, who pay a large share of health insurance premiums, can also realize savings from increased use of newer and better medicines. A recent study showed that a new drug for migraine headaches saved $435 per month per treated employee due to a reduction in absenteeism and lost productivity costs, while the monthly cost of the drug per patient was only $44.00. Depression also places a huge economic burden on employers. But, according to a study published in the journal *Health Economics*, medical costs declined by $822 per employee per year and absenteeism dropped by nine days when workers with depression were treated with prescription medicines.

Health care is changing. Prescription drugs, which once played only a minor role, are now the preferred treatment for a wide range of conditions. This means more people are staying on the job and taking care of their families. And even though prescription medicines are playing a bigger role in health care, they still account for only a small percentage of total health care costs – just over eight percent in 1998. Health plans clearly realize that prescription drugs can be cost-effective and that their members would much rather take a pill than undergo surgery. Not surprisingly, they are turning increasingly to these treatments.

So, next time you hear the myth that prescription drugs are the major cause of escalating insurance premiums, don't believe it. Cost-effective medicines deliver one of the biggest values in health care.

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Bill Jones:
From GOP Good Ol' Boy t

Will his recipe for GOP survival really work?

By Bill Ainsworth

Normally, the political musings of California's little-known secretary of state might not rate attention from more than a few indulgent friends and family members.

But the unassuming Bill Jones stepped into the national spotlight in February when he shocked the political world by switching his allegiance from GOP establishment favorite George W. Bush to renegade Republican John McCain, becoming the Arizona senator's highest-ranking California supporter. By doing so, his political theories on the GOP's survival in California have taken center stage.

His decision to bolt from the party's preferred candidate, however, may have had more to do with Democratic Governor Gray Davis than either McCain or Bush.

The pragmatic Jones believes that if Republicans are to have any chance of defeating the richly funded, highly popular Davis in 2002 they must do two things that go against their political instincts: encourage a high voter turnout and crusade for campaign finance reform.

Those ideas run counter to reigning Republican dogma that fewer voters and more money mean bigger GOP victories.

But some insiders think that Jones might be onto something.

"It's not anti-Republican," said GOP political consultant Sal Russo. "It's un-Republican. It's just different. The key to politics is to be different enough so people will remember you."

During his first term in office, Jones quietly and efficiently did his job, toiling in the obscurity that is the fate of nearly all statewide constitutional officers.

But in 1998, by virtue of surviving the Democratic slaughter of the Dan Lungren-led Republican ticket, Jones suddenly found himself as the top elected Republican in California. Like McCain, Jones is a rock-solid conservative with a reputation for being a moderate because of his emphasis on voter turnout and campaign finance reform.

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Republican Renegade

Bill Jones inside the Golden State Museum, which he was instrumental in getting off the ground. California Journal photo

Now this earnest, conservative rancher from the state's heartland may represent the best — and perhaps only — chance that Republicans have of recapturing the governor's office. Jones himself downplays speculation that he's the GOP's best candidate for governor, focusing instead on how the party can best woo voters.

The 50-year-old politician insists that even though his presidential candidate lost, his vision of a future Republican triumph won a stunning victory. While Jones has since re-embraced Bush as the party's nominee, he nevertheless contends that the excitement generated by McCain's message of campaign finance reform helped attract droves of independents and Democrats to the Republican side in the March primary.

Together, the two Republican presidential candidates won 10 percent more of the vote than the two Democratic

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Bill Jones' political style "is not anti-Republican...It's just different. The key to politics is to be different enough so people will remember you."

— Sal Russo, political consultant

presidential candidates, Vice President Al Gore and former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley.

Jones said that his decision to jump off the Bush bandwagon was not sudden or impulsive. Nor was it self-serving. "There was certainly nothing in it for me; if anything, it's a down for me," he said, referring to the political heat he took from fellow Republicans.

"My job is to do what's right for California. This decision shows us a way to win in November... (By reaching out to independents and crossover Democrats) we now have a model for winning a high turnout election."

Going against the party line

As secretary of state, Jones has followed his instincts rather than adhering strictly to party loyalty. He successfully defended the state's open primary, which allows all voters to cast ballots for any candidate regardless of party.

Under the arcane rules of the primary, all voters can select a presidential candidate from any party, but only the votes of registered party members count for selecting convention delegates. Jones was a lone voice in the wilderness against that system, asking the Republican Party to count the presidential ballots of non-Republican voters — but it was a cause he lost.

Conventional wisdom holds that Democrats do better when voter turnout is higher. Nevertheless, Jones has encouraged voter turnout through a variety of get-out-the-vote programs and by embracing the federal motor voter law, which encourages people to register to vote at Department of Motor Vehicles offices.

By contrast, former Republican Governor Pete Wilson, a savvy GOP strategist in his own right, went to extraordinary lengths to defeat the law, waging an ultimately futile court fight to overturn it on the grounds that it represented an intrusion into states' rights.

Wilson's not-so-hidden agenda, however, was to follow the old Republican playbook of discouraging less-educated and less-wealthy citizens from voting.

Jones differs in other ways from the mainstream GOP as a longtime member of the tiny club of Republicans who support campaign finance reform.

He recalls writing a check in 1988 in support of Proposition 73, the ballot measure that was approved by voters but thrown out by the courts.

But Jones split with McCain over Proposition 25, which was soundly defeated in the March primary. McCain backed the plan to limit contributions, increase disclosure and provide some public financing of elections.

Jones opposed it because of his distaste for public financing. Now, he's launched his own proposal, which limits contributions from any one person to $25,000 to a political party per year, $10,000 to a statewide candidate per election and $5,000 to a legislative candidate.

Initially, Jones planned to gather signatures to get his proposal on the ballot as an initiative but now says he plans to work with legislative leaders to see if they can find agreement on a campaign finance reform bill.

Political reformer Tony Miller, who served as acting secretary of state and was narrowly defeated by Jones in 1994, criticized his Republican successor for being only lukewarm about reform.

"He hasn't taken a leadership role in campaign finance reform," Miller said. "He's opposed public financing and supported limits that are too high."

Still, Miller gives Jones credit for achieving one important breakthrough: putting contributions on the Internet so everyone can see who's donating. Before that, campaign contribution disclosure forms could be viewed only on paper documents stored in a small, understaffed office in Sacramento.

"I will give him credit for online disclosure. He fought for that from the day he took office and got it through," Miller said. "It's a significant development."

Jones also takes credit for aggressively investigating voter fraud cases and teaming up with private companies to build a highly regarded election Web site that got more than 3 million hits on the night of the November 1998 election.

"People have grown accustomed to immediate access and availability to technology in so many parts of their lives that we're endeavoring to try to accomplish the same things in government," he said.

Additionally, Jones has taken a leading role among secretaries of state nationwide in trying to streamline the nation's confused method of choosing presidential nominees.

He's a key proponent of rotating regional primaries — a scheme that would set up four regional primaries each presidential election year. The order would rotate each election, giving each region a chance to be first.

Political Roots in the Central Valley

Jones traces his interest in efficient, conservative government back to the 1960s when he served as student body

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president of California State University, Fresno.

His candidacy was a reaction to the violence and anti-Vietnam War protests occurring at other colleges, which found little support among the sons and daughters of farmers who populated Fresno State.

At the time, another prominent Central Valley politician, state Senator Charles Poochigian (R-Fresno), also served in student government at the state college.

Poochigian said Jones' character hasn't changed from his student government days.

"His friends and supporters have always viewed him as steady, solid, cautious and thoughtful," he said.

After graduating from college, Jones went back to work on the family farm near the San Joaquin Valley town of Firebaugh.

Jones married, started his own feedlot and adopted the early-to-bed and early-to-rise farm habits that stay with him today.

Staff members take advantage of their boss's 5 a.m. wake-up time by scheduling lots of early morning meetings. They also know he has a hard time keeping his eyes open at fundraisers, dinners or receptions that last past 10 p.m.

"Once a farmer, always a farmer," said Jones.

During his active farming years, Jones developed a love for horseback riding and considerable skills as a calf roper. He fondly remembers competing in jackpots — friendly competitions where cattle ranchers and their hands see who can lasso a calf the fastest.

But these days, his political career has prevented him from roping cattle or even owning a horse for many years.

Still, Jones keeps in close touch with his family's ranch and farming operation. The 6,000-acre family business produces a variety of vegetables, including asparagus. The farm and accompanying feedlot are run by his father, his brother, his daughter and son-in-law.

Jones lost his first race for office in 1976 but, six years later, won an Assembly seat. In the Assembly, he compiled a strong record against new taxes, abortion rights and gun control, and assumed leadership of the Assembly Republicans in 1991 as a moderate alternative to Ross Johnson, who is current leader of Senate Republicans. Jones' tenure, which lasted about 18 months, had the backing of the moderate Wilson.

Jones also established his anti-crime credentials in 1994 as author of the state's popular three strikes law, which adds lengthy sentences to repeat offenders. During the law's journey through the Legislature, Jones cemented his reputation as a stubborn and disciplined politician by refusing to change any of the law's technical flaws.

Making no apologies

It was precisely this reputation as a steady, loyal politician that made his decision to switch from Bush to McCain even more puzzling to his supporters.

Poochigian said he was surprised to hear of Jones' switch, but he considers it a typical primary squabble.

"The good news is that we're going to be united in the fall," he said. "Bill Jones is as committed to electing George W. Bush as anyone."

State Senator Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga), a leader of the Bush campaign in California, is normally a highly talkative GOP strategist. But when it comes to Jones' defection, Brulte is a man of few words. "His decision spoke for itself," Brulte said.

Jones said he defected because he was bothered by the message from the Bush campaign during the South Carolina primary that the party was seeking only "good" Republicans and wasn't interested in attracting independents and Democrats.

"I took issue with Governor Bush because they were saying that the 'bad' Democrats were voting for McCain. That's the wrong message," he said. "I didn't want that message for California because it was inconsistent with everything I've said since I took this job."

While Jones said he regrets having to renege on an earlier endorsement of Bush, he offers no apologies. He believes that the excitement generated by McCain helped Republicans attract the independents and Democrats that they will need if they have any hopes of beating Governor Davis in two years. And, he says, "The results of the primary support my assumption."

Jones refuses to discuss what his future plans are, but many consider him the leading contender for the Republican gubernatorial nomination against Governor Davis in 2002.

Republican Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush also was considered a likely candidate, until his financial dealings with the insurance industry recently came under investigation.

While the governor looks strong because of his moderate approach to governing and his courting of traditional Republican contributors, such as the agricultural and business communities, Davis' prolific fundraising — $13 million and counting — might give Republicans one avenue of attack against him: campaign finance reform.

"Jones is taking the ball that's been given to him and playing with it," said Russo.

But Russo and other consultants argue that campaign finance reform is a winning issue only for anti-establishment, flamboyant politicians like McCain.

"The question for Bill Jones is: Does he have the style and personality to pull it off?" Russo said. "He's always been known as someone who's collegial and easy to work with, not a contentious person."

Republican consultant Tony Quinn believes Jones could have the gubernatorial nomination for the asking. But if Bush fares poorly in California in November, most analysts doubt that any Republican has much of a chance against Davis in 2002.

"If he wants to run for governor, I think he could get the nomination," said Quinn. "The question is, would it be worth (anything)?"

Bill Ainsworth, a Capitol Bureau reporter with the San Diego Union-Tribune, *has covered the Capitol for 10 years. Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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Asian activists vow a new outcome

by Susan Rasky

A decade ago, when court-appointed "special masters" redrew California's legislative and congressional districts, one of their unspoken but guiding principles was to accommodate Latino interests.

The result, clearly driven by demographics and adherance to the federal Voting Rights Act but more politically attuned than the state Supreme Court would ever acknowledge, was half a dozen new districts in which Latinos would be a majority.

The opportunities for either pleasing or displeasing California's other significant minority — Asian Americans — were far more limited. This time around, Asian American activists vow that things will be different.

Better prepared technically and more politically savvy about the redistricting process than they were a decade ago, Asian activists believe they can apply the lessons learned from Latinos in 1991 to their own communities as the 2001 process gets underway.

They say that Asian American political sensibilities have been heightened following investigations of 1996 campaign finance abuses involving Asian donors and recent espionage allegations against a Chinese scientist.

Although Asians made up about 10 percent of California's population in 1990, roughly 3 million people, they were too scattered to combine in a single congressional or Assembly district.

"Politicians feel free to ignore Asian Americans," says Kathay Feng, director of the voting rights and discrimination unit at the Los Angeles-based Asian Pacific American Legal Center. "There's a common political calculation: Asian Americans are not big enough to have a political impact; they won't make a big stink; there aren't enough of them on the bench seeking office at lower levels and, lately, that it's politically dangerous to put an Asian on the ticket."

Asians are projected to account for roughly 13 percent of the California population when the new census results are tabulated. That's the highest concentration in the continental United States, but the population is still spread too thinly to form either a congressional or an Assembly district in which Asians are a majority of eligible voters.

So the interesting question is precisely how Asian Americans choose to test their political potential, particularly if their redistricting interests put them in conflict with black and Latino communities. One possibility would be pushing for creation of Assembly "influence" districts where Asian voting presence, while short of a majority, might be maximized. Another would be to push for a single district, say in the east San Gabriel Valley, where Asians might constitute a bare majority in overall population but not voters.

Neither course guarantees the election of more Asian Americans to the Assembly. Activists must first convince the disparate ethnicities and nationalities deemed "Asian" under the Census Bureau's racial classification system that they actually have common interests and a common political identity.

> **"Politicians feel free to ignore Asian Americans."**
> **— Kathay Feng, Asian Pacific American Legal Center**

Subsequently convincing legislators that Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Vietnamese, Pakistanis and Malaysians actually vote as a bloc will be even more difficult.

"Our first goal is defensive," says Feng. "We want to make sure our communities are not split or diluted. Our second goal is to figure out whether trying to draw a majority minority district makes sense and, if so, how to combine it," Feng says.

Academic research and reliable polling on the attitudes and voting patterns among the subgroups classified as Asian are scant. What does exist suggests that older generations of Asian Americans tend to retain the national identities and ethnic animosities from their native countries, while Asians born in this country tend to have the same voting habits as the general population with similar income and education levels.

Both findings seem to contradict the idea that Asian Americans have a distinct political identity.

"'Asian American' is a construct built in the United States," says Professor Wendy Tam Cho, a political scientist at the University of Illinois, noting that the category "Hispanic" did not appear on census forms until 1980. "It's the census definition of race that drives redistricting. Once the census starts calling a group something, it makes a huge difference in the way the group forms and thinks of itself."

Asian activists are banking on precisely that.

Contributing editor Susan Rasky teaches journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, Graduate School of Journalism. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

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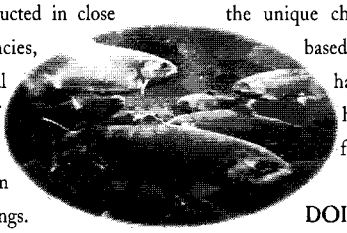

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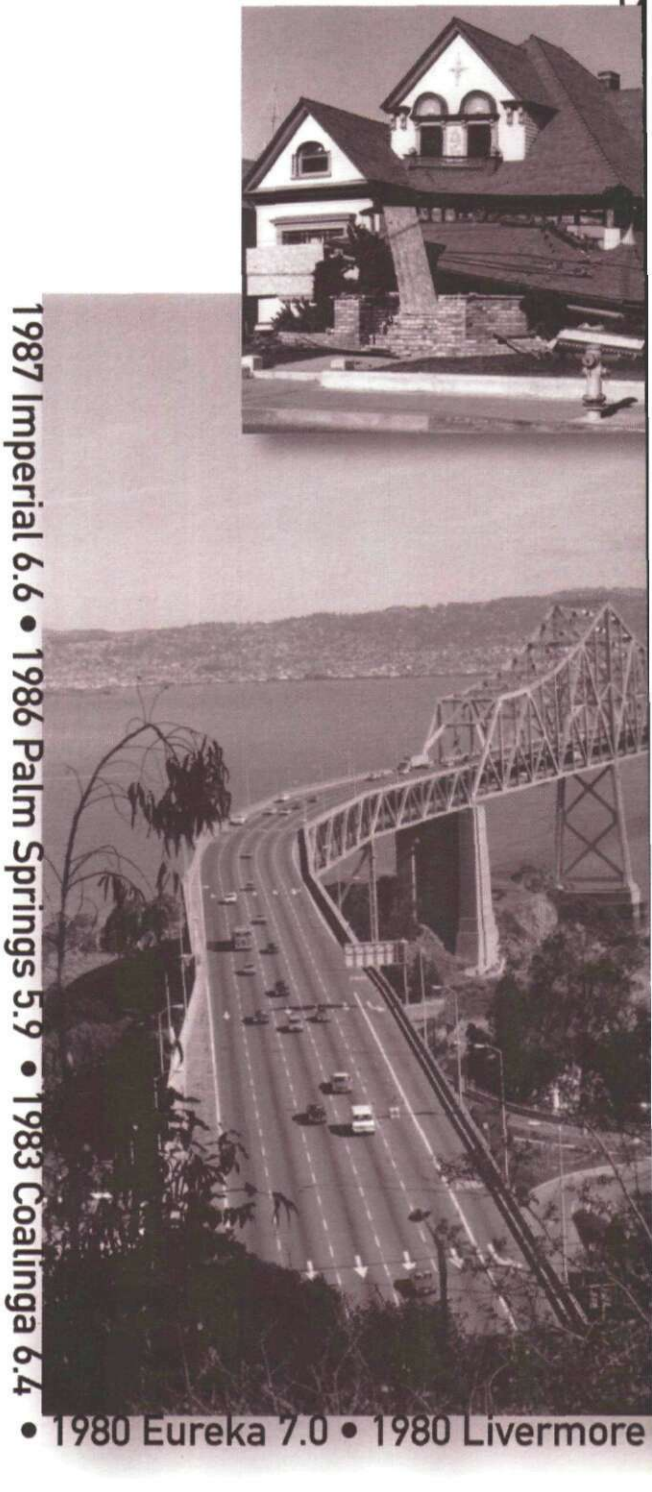
When the next big one hits, will California be ready?

Every earthquake shakes out new insights on seismic safety but shoring up the state's vulnerable buildings and warding off future catastrophes remains a task of staggering proportions.

By Gil Davis



It was just 15 seconds of shaking, but the 6.9 Loma Prieta earthquake in the San Francisco Bay Area more than a decade ago unleashed a jumble of death and destruction. Sixty-three people perished as a result of the quake and 3,757 suffered injuries. An estimated $6 billion worth of property damage occurred.

On October 17, 1999, the 10th anniversary of the temblor, I recalled the tragedy when a brick parapet toppled from a San Francisco building, crushing and killing five people, including two colleagues of mine at *MacUser* magazine. They were among our brightest and most personable editors. But their lives were cut short by tons of brick falling from the facade of an unreinforced masonry building.

Unreinforced masonry, or URM as it's known in the building industry, was demonstrated potentially vulnerable to collapse as far back as the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. Yet more than 50 years later, people were losing their lives in part because building owners failed to heed warnings to strengthen decades-old construction in need of reinforcement.

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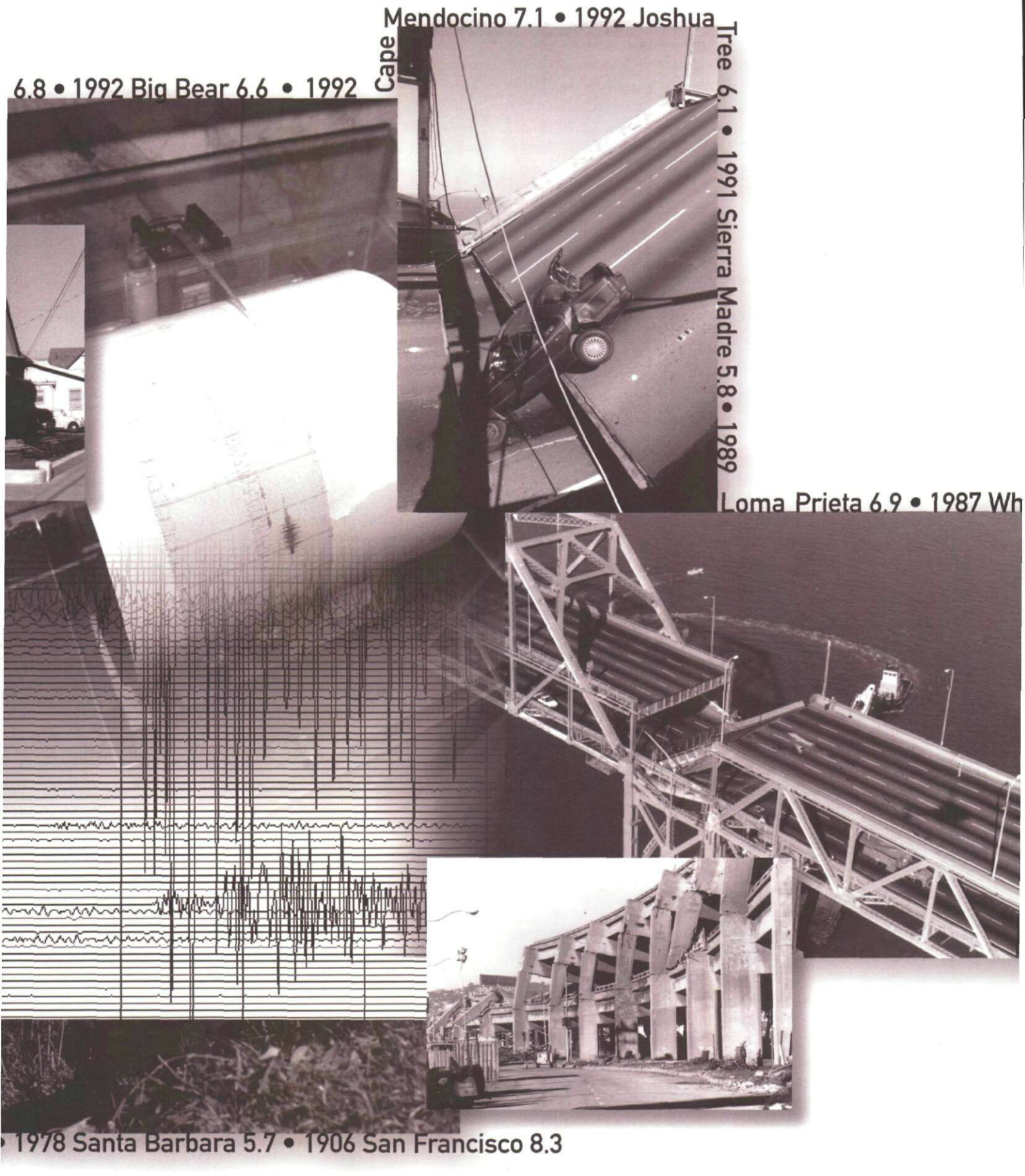
Mendocino 7.1 • 1992 Joshua
Cape
Tree 6.1 • 1991 Sierra Madre 5.8 • 1989
6.8 • 1992 Big Bear 6.6 • 1992
Loma Prieta 6.9 • 1987 Wh
• 1978 Santa Barbara 5.7 • 1906 San Francisco 8.3

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From shoring up masonry buildings to mapping the state's most hazardous earthquake-prone zones, every major earthquake in California's modern history has yielded new insights into how to ward off future catastrophes.

Prior to the 1933 Long Beach quake, for instance, there were no uniform building code requirements for new construction. Prior to the 1971 San Fernando quake, there were no earthquake hazard maps available statewide. Before the 1989 Loma Prieta, there were no landslide or liquefaction zone maps to aid local government in determining whether to issue new building permits. And prior to the 1994 Northridge temblor, seismic engineers had no clue that certain steel-frame structures were at risk of cracking and collapsing in a big shaker.

Taken together, "The acts are unique to California," said Davis. "No other jurisdiction in the world requires these kinds of studies before a local building permit is issued."

After the San Fernando quake, the next huge shaker to command California's attention was the devastating Mexico City rocker in 1985. The following year, the California Earthquake Hazard Reduction Act was signed into law in response to the massive urban losses that California witnessed south of the border.

The act required the California Seismic Safety Commission, an advisory board at the heart of the state's earthquake safety efforts, to launch a series of five-year plans and guidelines for hazard mitigation. The first such

"Every earthquake teaches us something and afterward [those lessons] can be applied."

— State Geologist Jim Davis

Certainly, earthquakes are nothing new to California. But in the aftermath of quakes that have rattled 'n' rolled across the landscape, the question remains: What has California learned? Has the state taken major strides in strengthening its buildings and bridges — or have earthquakes yielded little more than tragic losses, riveting TV coverage and only a passing interest from legislators?

The answers are not to be taken lightly, given the likelihood of another serious quake, and the nightmarish worst-case scenarios drawn up by experts who believe a massive fracture is long overdue along California's coastline, especially on the Bay Area's Hayward fault line. "Every earthquake teaches us something," said State Geologist Jim Davis, "and afterward [those lessons] can be applied."

California's modern seismic safety planning efforts date back nearly 30 years to 1972 when state lawmakers, stunned by the 7.1-magnitude San Fernando quake, passed the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. The act was designed to prevent construction of new buildings on active fault lines. It requires the state geologist to issue official earthquake fault zone maps, which are distributed to cities, counties and state agencies for planning new construction.

That landmark law was followed in 1990 by the Seismic Hazard Mapping Act, which requires that maps be drawn up by the state Department of Conservation showing areas prone to earthquake-induced liquefaction landslides. Thus far, some 39 earthquake hazard maps have been completed, primarily for Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties, as well as the northern half of San Francisco. Cities and counties within those zones must withhold permits until geological testing determines where and how to best construct buildings to withstand severe ground movement.

planning document, titled *"California at Risk"* and published in 1987, outlined 70 new earthquake-safety initiatives. "We worked with dozens of state agencies and a variety of local governments to devise a series of strategies that they could implement," said Tom Tobin, commission executive director from 1985 to 1995.

The devastation wrought by the Mexico City quake also served as a catalyst to get the ball rolling on the long-postponed issue of what to do about vulnerable unreinforced masonry buildings. A bill authored by then-state Senator Alfred E. Alquist (D-San Jose) required local agencies to inventory URM structures and settle on plans to fix them by 1990. Ultimately, a stunning 25,500 buildings statewide were identified as needing reinforcement.

The timetable for correcting the problem, of course, was not swift enough to avoid the tragic URM failure in the Bay Area when Loma Prieta jolted a wide swath, causing stonework to tumble from buildings onto streets and sidewalks below. Thus began San Francisco's program to upgrade the city's unreinforced masonry structures, starting in 1990. Years later, of San Francisco's 2,067 URM buildings, about 900 were seismically upgraded, demolished or exempted. Less than half of those — about 400 — were actually upgraded, according to city statistics and a 1997 report to the state Legislature.

By contrast, Los Angeles has upgraded or demolished all but about 450 of that city's original 8,000 unreinforced masonry buildings, according to a 1997 seismic safety commission report.

Other cities have not made such strides. Only about 5,000 (29 percent) of the 17,500 URM buildings outside of Los Angeles have been upgraded or demolished during the 14 years of the law's existence, the commission reports.

"California's major cities, like Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego, to some extent, are taking the URM

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problem seriously. Then you have Long Beach and Santa Rosa, which have essentially taken care of their URM structures," said commission chairman Daniel Shapiro. "But there are some financially depressed communities, like San Bernardino and Eureka, where the URM seismic upgrade program has been discontinued or extended because building owners say they can't afford the needed repairs."

Caltrans steps it up

When the Loma Prieta earthquake struck — just two years after the commission prepared its omnibus *"California at Risk"* report — state legislators inundated the commission with calls in search of proposed new laws they could sponsor. "We were so swamped with requests that all we could do was offer them a fresh copy of *'California at Risk,'*" recalled Tobin. "It gave legislators the ability to write law based on a strategy that made some sense."

Representatives flooded the state printer's office with a torrent of 443 seismically related bills, of which 164 were sent to Governor George Deukmejian and 137 were signed into law. During the 1991-92 legislative session, 139 additional earthquake safety bills were introduced and 55 were signed into law by Governor Pete Wilson.

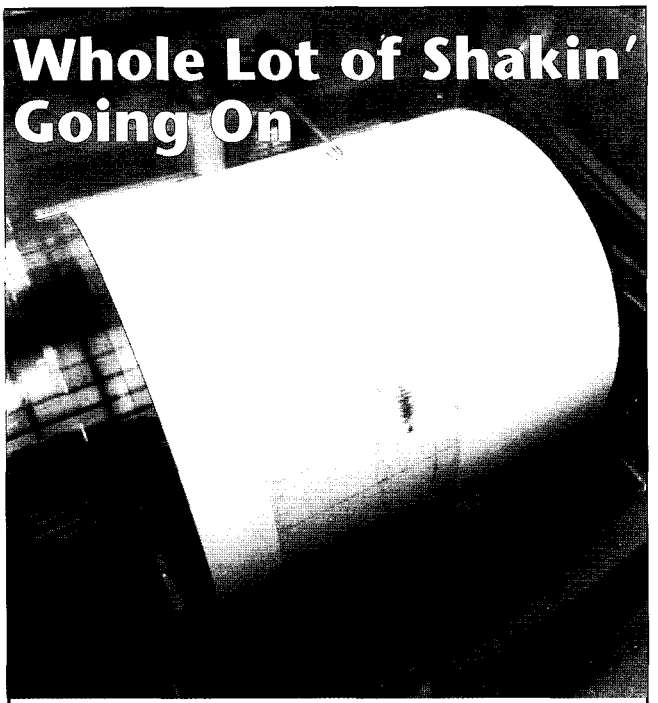
"Most of California's legislation to improve seismic safety was enacted following destructive earthquakes," noted Lloyd Cluff, head of Pacific Gas & Electric Company's geoscience department.

But new laws and hazard mitigation programs were not all that came of the lessons learned from Loma Prieta. The state also embarked on a new, more aggressive, proactive role for Caltrans in upgrading California's highways and bridges. Stung by 41 deaths from the collapse of the 12-year-old Cypress freeway in Oakland, Caltrans identified 1,039 bridges that needed strengthening throughout the state. Today, 99 percent of those structures are seismically stronger at a total cost of $815 million.

Leading the Caltrans retrofit program is Jim Roberts, the 68-year-old chief deputy director who has already worked past normal retirement age to complete the strengthening of California's bridges. He said the key to the success of Caltrans' seismic upgrade program is a 10-year, $40 million research effort to find out how the ground moves and interacts with bridge-like structures. "We want to make sure every detail we decide to use is thoroughly tested," Roberts said.

That research, now underway, is "pushing the envelope" in terms of better soils testing, better bridge design and use of improved construction materials, said Caltrans spokesman Jim Drago. "The advances since Loma Prieta, in terms of seismic engineering, have probably been as dramatic as the previous 100 years. It's nothing short of a miracle."

Bolstered by these advancements, Caltrans engineers are now able to anticipate and prepare for what will happen during an earthquake, rather than simply responding afterward to how structures withstood an earthquake.



Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On

When the next big one hits California, it'll be duly recorded inside the state Capitol. That's because, minute by minute, seismic activity anywhere in the state is being transmitted to an obscure box tucked into a corner of the Capitol's east entrance.

Sitting silently under a plastic dome, the Capitol's official seismograph is as unobtrusive as a sergeant-at-arms. Occasionally ogled by tourist groups touring the Capitol, it mostly sits unnoticed as its pen scratches a record of every jiggle in the earth's crust. Although it's receiving seismic signals primarily from a station located near San Luis Reservoir in Gilroy, it's sensitive enough to pick up seismic jolts from as far away as Greece and Turkey.

It's been inside the Capitol since at least the 1970s, when it was installed as a prop for an exhibit on California earthquakes. Actually, it's one of 100s of seismographs that are located around the state. Those in Northern California are monitored by UC Berkeley; those in the south by CalTech. In addition, there are seismographs run by the U.S. Geological Survey and the state Department of Water Resources.

— Claudia Buck

After the 1994 Northridge earthquake, Caltrans identified an additional 1,155 bridges that needed attention. That seismic retrofit program, which entails adding reinforcement and pouring additional concrete, is 94 percent completed and is expected to be finished in 2005 at a total cost of $1.05 billion. In addition, Caltrans is now seismically retrofitting seven of the state's toll bridges at an estimated cost of $2.62 billion.

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Long-held premises are shaken

The Loma Prieta earthquake also spurred into action the 5,000-member Structural Engineers Association of California, which has instigated a number of seismic improvements to the state's Uniform Building Code. These include the important, so-called "near-field effect."

This regulation, in effect since July 1, 1999, requires buildings within nine miles of an active fault to be significantly more earthquake-resistant than those built farther from the fault. Various formulas take into account the predicted fault activity, the type of structure and the ability of the underlying soil to amplify ground motions.

California has experienced something of a seismic safety revolution in recent years, primarily as a direct result of discoveries made after the Northridge earthquake. The revolution didn't begin with a shot, however, but with a crack. In fact, it was thousands of cracks — so many that a few steel-frame buildings were seen listing a little to one side after the January 1994 Northridge earthquake.

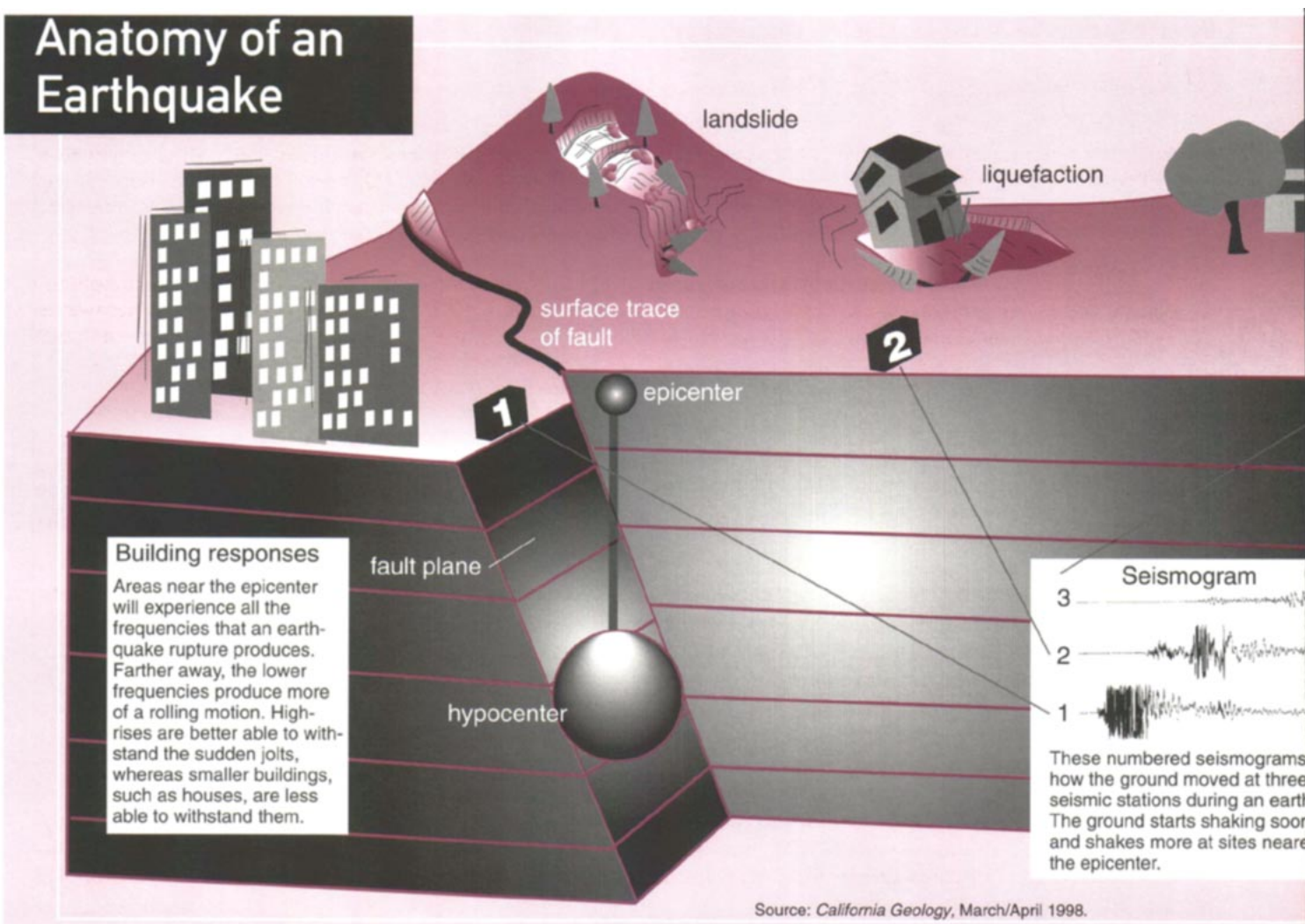
Engineers inspecting more than 200 damaged steel structures were shocked to find thousands of cracks in and near the welds of many steel beams and columns. Some columns were completely fractured, thus raising the possibility of collapse. A Federal Emergency Management Agency 1999 report to Congress concluded: "Had the Northridge earthquake lasted longer, it is possible that some structures with completely severed columns would have sustained either partial or total collapse."

More recently, FEMA clarified its findings by concluding that it is highly unlikely that a moderate earthquake will cause collapse of certain types of welded steel buildings. Only at sites close to a severe earthquake is there a finite probability that a collapse could occur.

Nevertheless, FEMA embarked in 1995 on funding research for two building types: steel-frame office buildings and wood-frame construction. Both research projects are aimed at reducing potential damage during a major earthquake.

The $11 million steel research, called the SAC Steel Project, is nearing completion while the $6.9 million wood-frame research is scheduled to last into next year.

Meanwhile, building officials took the unusual action in 1995 of withdrawing Uniform Building Code provisions governing the most popular form of steel office building construction — the "moment frame" — in order to come up with new guidelines. "Moment frame" is a technical term indicating that the framework has no diagonal braces to spoil the views through its windows.


Anatomy of an Earthquake
landslide
liquefaction
surface trace of fault
epicenter
1
2
fault plane
hypocenter
Building responses
Areas near the epicenter will experience all the frequencies that an earthquake rupture produces. Farther away, the lower frequencies produce more of a rolling motion. High-rises are better able to withstand the sudden jolts, whereas smaller buildings, such as houses, are less able to withstand them.
Seismogram
3
2
1
These numbered seismograms how the ground moved at three seismic stations during an earth The ground starts shaking soo and shakes more at sites near the epicenter.
Source: California Geology, March/April 1998.

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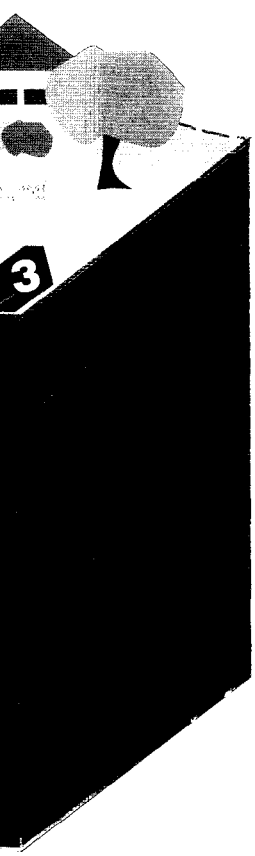
Across the country, the SAC Steel Project's consultants have conducted hundreds of laboratory tests welding together various beam-to-column connections and then wrenching them apart as hundreds of measurements are recorded. Their goal is to use this structural testing as the basis for both the design of future steel buildings and the development of cost-effective repairs for significantly damaged older structures. It follows a frank admission by the structural engineering profession that cracks developed in steel frames because designs were far exceeding safe levels established by scientific testing. Since the 1960s, the steel building industry found it could cut costs by welding connections in beams and columns instead of using rivets and bolts. The new technique enabled steel to be more competitively priced with concrete as a construction material.

Despite warnings and advisories issued by the seismic safety commission and FEMA, it's not known how many steel-building owners in California have followed through with inspecting their buildings for fractures. Some structural engineers have said privately that only the pending sale or refinancing of an office building appears to prompt the search for a weakened steel framework.

Consequently, six years after the Northridge quake exposed weaknesses in steel frames, the public still doesn't know how many cracks may or may not exist in some 400 steel buildings within the greater Los Angeles area and dozens of steel structures in the San Francisco Bay Area. The issue is complicated by the fact that, even if building owners do find fractures, they aren't required to inform occupants or visitors about the results of their structural investigations. A bill that would have mandated such public posting was introduced in the Legislature after the Northridge quake but failed to win passage.

"There's still a lot to be done (because) retrofitting existing buildings is optional, not mandatory," said Davis, the state geologist. "It's an education process to inform people of the risks they are taking by not investing in their property...rather than waiting for the next earthquake to happen."

The belief that steel buildings hold up well in a quake goes back to the 1906 San Francisco earthquake when some 20 steel structures performed well, said Ron Hamburger, chairman of the Structural Engineers Association of California. "This experience created the myth of invulnerability," he said. "Engineers didn't want to let go of that. It took the Northridge earthquake to re-examine that myth."



Earthquake Glossary

Earthquake: An earthquake is caused by a sudden slip on a fault plane, much like what happens when you snap your fingers together and sideways. This process occurs in an earthquake. Stresses in the Earth's outer layer push the sides of the fault together. The friction across the surface of the fault holds the rocks together so they do not slip immediately when pushed sideways. Eventually enough stress builds up and the rocks slip suddenly, releasing energy in waves that travel through the rock to cause the shaking we feel during an earthquake.

Earthquake waves: Earthquakes produce two types of waves — the P-wave, a compressional wave that travels fast but is not as large, and the S-wave, a shear wave that is slower but larger and does most of the damage. These waves cannot travel faster than the speed of sound through rock (fewer than 2 miles per second); however, they can travel relatively slower or faster depending on the type of rock they travel through. The denser granite-like rock transmits waves that travel faster than through layered sandstone and claystones.

Epicenter: The point on the Earth's surface directly above the hypocenter or focus.

Fault plane: A fault is a thin zone of crushed rock between two blocks of rock, and can be any length, from inches to miles. When an earthquake occurs on one of the faults, the rock on one side of the fault stops with respect to the other.

Hypocenter: The point inside the Earth where the earthquake's energy begins. This point is actually an area along the fault plane, and it can be hundreds of miles long and several miles wide.

Landslide: Landslides can be caused by the shaking of the earth during an earthquake. Unstable soil and rock, some distance from the hypocenter, and other geologic conditions all contribute to a landslide.

Liquefaction: Liquefaction happens when loosely packed, water-logged sediment loses strength during strong shaking. This condition can cause considerable damage during earthquakes.

Seismograph: How fast the ground shakes at a particular place is recorded by a seismograph. The paper recording is a seismogram that shows the arrival times of the P-wave and S-wave. Seismologists can calculate the location of the hypocenter, and therefore the epicenter, by knowing the time it takes for the waves to travel from the hypocenter to the seismograph.

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As geologists and engineers flock to each new major earthquake site to take and record measurements, the lessons learned are emerging faster and faster, as highly accurate, digital instruments measure how the top, middle and bottom of buildings react to severe ground movements.

At the same time, however, the pace of finding political and legislative solutions to mitigate earthquake hazards often still lags behind, thanks to gridlock resulting from competing interests fighting for laws favorable to their side. For instance, this year's legislative session features at least four bills to roll back seismic safety requirements for hospitals — one of the significant safety mandates adopted after the Northridge earthquake. With hospitals contending that the state's seismic safety mandates are too costly, battles over cutting back on those mandates have become a staple of the seismic safety commission's agenda.

Before hospitals launched their quest to postpone deadlines for upgrading their facilities, similar efforts were tried by opponents of costly safety requirements for schools adopted in the wake of the 1933 Long Beach quake.

Former commission chair Patricia Snyder, noting that the commission is modestly funded at $774,000 annually, cites as one of its chief achievements its success at fending off attempts to undermine mandates to strengthen school buildings.

"If you look at the budgets of other state agencies and commissions, we're hardly even there [at a normal funding level]. So we limit ourselves to biting off chunks we can chew," Snyder said. "We've had a good record sponsoring about three bills each year and defending the 1933 Field Act from attempts to weaken it. People say the Field Act makes a school slightly more expensive, but not a single school or portion of a school that's been built since 1933 has ever collapsed — and that's something that can't be said for a lot of other types of buildings."

This year, the commission is monitoring 20 earthquake safety bills. "There's a lot of very significant legislative activity," said Fred Turner, structural engineer with the seismic safety commission, "an awful lot." Of the 20 bills, the commission is sponsoring five. Among those on the front burner is a proposed tax credit for residential building owners who undertake costly retrofitting projects, authored by Assemblyman Jack Scott (D-Pasadena) and Assemblywoman Ellen Corbett (D-San Leandro). Corbett, who traveled to Greece and Turkey with commissioners recently to witness firsthand the sort of housing crises triggered by major quakes, is carrying a $10 million financing bill to help local governments cover earthquake losses.

Often, Turner noted, the battles won by the 25-year-old seismic safety commission and its staff of 10 are the ones that serve as the biggest lightning rods. "There has been a lot of attention paid to hospitals because we were successful in getting laws passed after the Northridge earthquake," he said. "Some people want to chip away at the whole notion [of mandating facility strengthening]. Then again, the hospital industry recognizes people want to be safe when they go into the operating room and put their lives in the hospital's hands."

Privately, some California Seismic Safety Commission members and staffers say that, while they wouldn't wish a major earthquake on any region, they realize more lives will be lost in building collapses before legislators find the political will to choose life-saving mandates over the wishes of competing interests.

Meanwhile, on a personal level, the loss of my two friends at *MacUser* magazine to a falling brick building during the Loma Prieta earthquake still affects how I live. When I walk the streets of San Francisco, I choose the side of the street that has newer buildings.

Extreme? I thought so until a friend who's a structural engineer told me, "I do the same thing. In fact, I moved my offices out of San Francisco because there are too many older, unsafe buildings, ready to rain bricks on pedestrians."

Giving Californians the assurance they need will not happen overnight. If the state is to make serious headway in preventing death, destruction and economic dislocation from earthquakes, it will take both the governor and the Legislature to focus anew on solutions.

Earthquakes on the Web

The Internet is putting improved earthquake data directly into the public's hands. Dozens of maps on fault lines, landslides, road closures, and disaster assistance are available. One of the more fascinating is a U.S. Geological Survey site that provides hourly, daily and weekly records of earthquake activity throughout California. Every hour, the USGS site records every seismic event, no matter how small, and its precise location on the map.

Want to know more? Here are some Internet sites:

- Earthquake History 1800 to present in California:
  www.seismic.ca.gov/sscigeq.html
- Frequently Asked Questions About Earthquakes
  http://quake.wr.usgs.gov/more/eqfaq.html
- Map of Recent Earthquakes in California
  http://quake.wr.usgs.gov/recenteqs/index.html
- The Giant 1906 San Francisco Earthquake
  http://quake.wr.usgs.gov/more/1906/
- Database of Potential Sources of Earthquakes Larger than Magnitude 6 in Northern California
  http://quake.wr.usgs.gov/hazprep/NCEP/
- Map of Potential Sources of Major Earthquakes in Southern California
  http://www.scecdc.scec.org/masterfault1.html
- USGS Report on the 1994 Northridge Earthquake Contains Surprising Results
  http://greenwood.cr.usgs.gov/pub/open-file-reports/ofr-96-0263/
- Measuring Earthquake Size
  http://wwwneic.cr.usgs.gov/neis/general/handouts/measure.html

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Gil Davis is an associate of the Center for Investigative Reporting, Inc. in San Francisco. He resides three miles from the San Andreas Fault in Atherton. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

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Labor toils mightily

Democrats find they can no longer take organized labor's backing for granted. In the new political paradigm, candidates must first prove their loyalty to the "working family" agenda.

By Kathleen Les

If labor once was an easy date for any ole Democrat who came around, the recent primary election shows that union leaders made good on their promise to know whom they're courting before going all the way.

The olden days when Democratic candidates could count on an automatic check in the mail are over, say labor representatives. Instead, a carefully selected handful of contestants in the March election received the kind of campaign help candidates covet as much or more than money — volunteer manpower to turn out voters *en masse* for union-backed candidates.

Not that this is anything new. Labor has always been known to deploy an army of foot soldiers into the

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or a select few

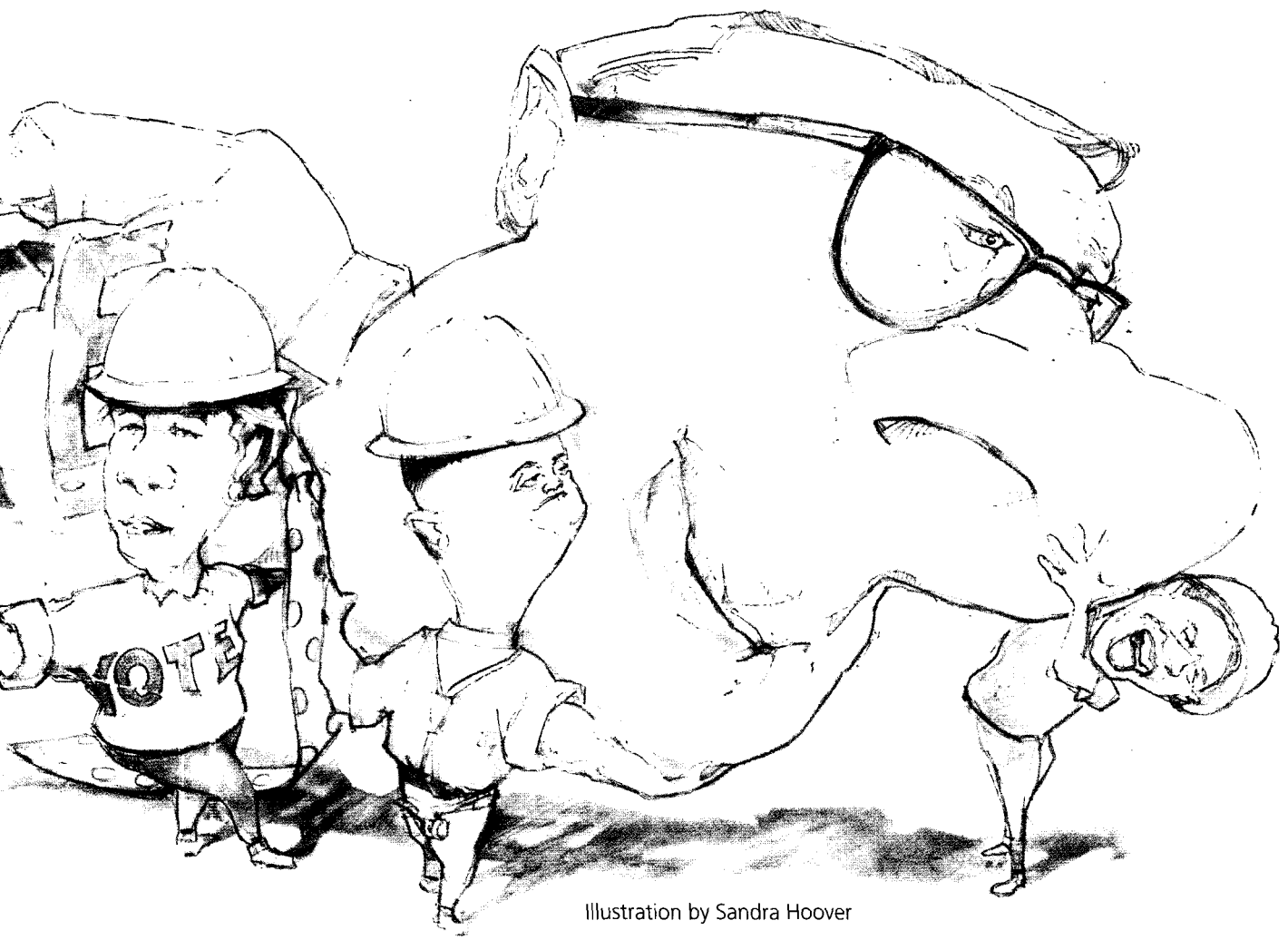

Illustration by Sandra Hoover

streets to get out the vote. But these days, unions want greater assurance that, once elected, their candidates will remain faithful to the group that brought them to the dance.

"Checkbook politics doesn't work," insists Art Pulaski, who took the helm of the California Labor Federation three years ago and set out to change the way labor does business in the political arena.

These days labor is looking for the kind of long-term accountability from candidates that Pulaski says doesn't necessarily follow from a pro forma check and endorsement. It's a new ballgame where only the tried and tested earn labor's backing.

If union involvement was missing in a broad sweep of primary races, it's clear that, in the handful of state and congressional races targeted, organized labor made a big difference. In those contests, leaders concentrated on getting workers to the polls by circulating no less than a million fliers at job sites throughout California.

As a result, union households accounted for 26 percent of the Democratic electorate and 16 percent of GOP voters in the recent primary election — not quite as high as the turnout sparked by the anti-union Proposition 226 two years ago, but significantly higher than other elections this decade. This strength in numbers made a critical difference in key races around the state.

"What we can do, nobody else can touch," said Sharon Cornu, spokeswoman for the California Labor Federation. "The volunteer effort on phones and at work sites is the kind of love money can't buy."

It was with labor's help on March 7 that Assemblyman Mike Honda (D-San Jose), who stepped late into the race to succeed Republican U.S. Representative Tom Campbell, handily beat a pack of five fellow Democrats for the 15th Congressional District nomination. Honda slid past venture capitalist Bill Peacock and his $1 million war chest to capture nearly 70 percent of the Democratic vote. The primary victory came courtesy of more than 42,000 volunteer hours arranged by the South

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Some candidates are slighted and others even punished by neglect as labor zeroes in on targeted races.

Bay Labor Council in the campaign's final days.

Similarly, the Monterey County Central Labor Council turned out its rank-and-file members to help Monterey County Supervisor Simon Salinas beat fellow Democrat Sandra Pizarro. To be sure, plenty of checks flowed his way, but more than 3,000 leaflets circulated at work sites and 4,800 pieces of mail helped assure that union members showed up to vote for Salinas, who tallied 16 percent more Democratic votes than Pizarro.

"When people are getting tired of canned mail and then receive a call from a fellow union member, it's a qualitatively different kind of call," said Amy Newell, who ran the Monterey County labor effort on behalf of Salinas.

In the last four years, labor has become decidedly more fickle about who earns the union seal of approval, demonstrated by the 17-page questionnaire candidates were asked to fill out to earn labor's backing. Depending on responses to a variety of issues ranging from taxes to economic development to the right to organize, only those with a demonstrated track record on behalf of labor got the nod.

Solis, a model labor candidate

State Senator Hilda Solis (D-El Monte), champion of increasing the minimum wage and upping workers' compensation benefits, was rewarded for years of stepping up to the plate for labor causes. Among other things, a record fleet of 250 volunteers turned out to work on her behalf in the 31st Congressional District race. Solis' track record so impressed labor that she was favored over 18-year incumbent U.S. Representative Marty Martinez, who labor leaders say had become far too complacent about workers' rights.

Ground zero in the Solis campaign was the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, a coalition of local labor unions representing 800,000 members. Miguel Contreras, head of L.A.'s most powerful labor organization, oversaw what he refers to as a "whole war campaign — in the air and on the ground."

A centralized effort in seven L.A. area races — including five Democratic city council members heading to Sacramento and Solis for Congress — was about more than dropping a check in the mail, says Contreras. The L.A. labor organization spent some $300,000 and sent 38 different mailers to mobilize members to vote for these select candidates.

Labor claimed one of its sweetest showings in the Northern California state Senate district where Assemblyman Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch) outpolled incumbent state Senator Richard Rainey (R-Walnut Creek) by 3,000 votes in the primary. The two will meet again in November, of course, but union leaders boast of Torlakson's show of strength in the primary "beauty contest."

With labor leaders hyping Torlakson's candidacy as California's most important election for working families this year, the outpouring from the district's 68,000 labor households was significant. "Our efforts ... motivated both Democratic and Republican union members to vote," said John Dalrymple with the Central Labor Council in Martinez.

When labor chooses its battles carefully, some otherwise *sympatico* candidates end up suffering and going without the backing they hoped for – and in some cases felt they had earned fair and square. In Southern California, for instance, Assemblyman Wally Knox lost his bid to move up to the state Senate when Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica) bested him in the Democratic primary for the 23rd Senate District. "They got the endorsement, but not the ground operation," said Contreras, who noted that labor's resources only go so far under the new manifesto.

Feeling confident and ready, labor now heads into the fall election season with Congress on its mind. Winning a few key seats in California could tilt the House majority back toward Democrats, and union leaders have set their sights on at least three key races.

Honda will likely see considerably more of the labor ground effort that helped him win the primary. Labor also sees an opportunity to topple conservative U.S. Representative James Rogan (R-Glendale) now that state Senator Adam Schiff (D-Burbank), previously considered the underdog, proved conventional wisdom wrong by out-polling the incumbent in the primary. And though former Congresswoman Jane Harman has not always been the best vote for unions — she parted ways with workers on NAFTA — labor would rather see her return to her former Southern California seat than incumbent Republican Steve Kuykendall (R-Torrance).

Term limits complicate labor's job by pitting candidates against each other as they look to move up the political ladder. Candidates who might not otherwise run against each other in safe seats, such as occurred in the Kuehl-Knox state Senate race in West Los Angeles, force some tough choices. Some candidates are slighted and others even punished by neglect as labor zeroes in on targeted races.

"We're going to look at districts where we can be the margin of victory," said California Labor Federation's new political director, John Perez. On the job just a few months, Perez hails from the United Food and Commercial Workers, where he spent the last three years helping shape labor's new political statewide

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initiatives. The addition of Perez and several other political field staff represents a deepening of labor's electioneering capabilities both for state and federal races.

Going back home

But many say labor is simply returning to its roots of 30 or more years ago when political impact was measured not by its checkbook but by its vigor in turning out voters at the polls. In the intervening years, as union membership diminished amidst an economic evolution that saw service jobs on the upswing and manufacturing jobs flee overseas, unions used their wallets to throw their weight around the political domain. But as union ranks begin to swell again from a new surge of Latino workers in service jobs and white-collar employees, Big Labor has been busy remaking itself to better mesh not only with the so-called New Economy, but a new political paradigm.

Democrats will continue to earn the majority of labor's largesse in the foreseeable future, but labor leaders say they are prepared to be bipartisan. Teachers and service employee unions, for instance, heavily backed Republican moderate Tom Harman from Huntington Beach to ensure that anti-labor Proposition 226 co-author Jim Righeimer did not receive the Assembly nomination in the heavily Republican Orange County district. But an increasingly pro-corporate GOP in the last seven to eight years makes it harder to find Republicans willing to take up labor's causes, says the California Labor Federation's Pulaski.

"Labor is at a point where they have no choice but to change, and it's not a minute too soon," emphasized Assemblyman Gil Cedillo (D-Los Angeles), a union organizer before heading to Sacramento. While union membership has been on the upswing, the new union politics may be the bigger success story for labor, he said. Labor has managed to position itself among the most potent of electoral voices even though union workers make up only 10 percent of the work force.

"It's all about figuring out strategies for labor to maintain its historic position as the key institution focused on social change and social justice," said Cedillo. "It's a work in progress that's [happening] as the world changes."

Kathleen Les is associate editor of the California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com**.

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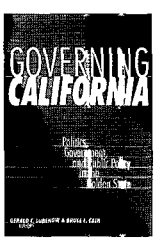

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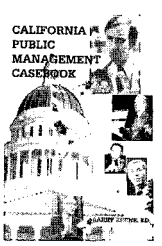

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Why California *won't* be on the VP ticket

by Marc Sandalow

Forget looking for skeletons in the closet. Try the following exercise to understand why there won't be a Californian on either party's 2000 ticket.

Ask anyone who plans to vote for Al Gore in November whether it would make a scintilla of difference if Chris Cox were on the GOP ticket (record "Who's that?" in the same category as "Who cares?") Alternately, try talking a George W. Bush supporter into switching votes by dangling the possibility of Gray Davis on the Democratic ticket.

It will quickly become apparent that Californians harbor little loyalty for native sons. In fact, polls have shown that some native sons detract from the ticket.

There is no statewide figure beloved enough to attract crossover voters. California is simply too big, too transient and too Democratic for a native son running mate to make much difference. (A good argument can be made for a native daughter, however. Dianne Feinstein might attract some swing California voters, though the main appeal probably would be gender, not geography.)

California is simply too big, too transient and too Democratic for a native son to make much difference.

It's a Golden State reality check for all the Washington pundits who have been floating California names on their long list of potential presidential running mates. Not that the facts will spoil the speculation. In theory, a California running mate makes all the sense in the world.

Consider this: Only once since 1928 have Republicans won the White House without a Californian (Hoover, Nixon or Reagan were on every winning ticket except in 1988.)

Simply put: the GOP would take anyone who could help them win the state, because California's 54 electoral votes would all but guarantee them the White House.

Had the stars lined up right for Dan Lungren in 1998, he'd be atop everyone's Veepstakes list. As it is, the state's top elected GOP official is Secretary of State Bill Jones, who defected to the John McCain camp just before the "Straight Talk Express" was derailed.

Which returns us to Cox. The Newport Beach congressman is popular with conservatives for his work on China. He is popular in Silicon Valley for his efforts to ban Internet taxes. He is a Washington insider who has nonetheless avoided being lumped with the Gingrich/Armey wing of the House Republicans. He is also smart, Catholic and a family man.

But he is better known inside the beltway than anywhere in California except his Orange County district. If Cox looked like he would carry California for the Republicans, he would not only be Bush's running mate, he would be the next vice president. His Achilles heel is that he has no demonstrated crossover appeal, even in his home state.

Democrats have a better-known bench but only slightly better prospects. Start with the governor, who on paper appears to be just the kind of running mate Gore needs.

Davis is a Washington outsider, a Vietnam vet, a centrist with proven success among Latinos and a loyal Gore ally. He is also one of the few public figures who makes Gore look animated by contrast.

But Davis has flatly ruled it out. "No. Exclamation point," he said recently, the same answer he has given on hundreds of occasions.

Feinstein is the Californian with the most realistic chance. She's a centrist, she's popular, and she is easily the nation's most recognizable woman in elected office.

But the odds remain against her selection. There is open concern about her ability to be appropriately subservient to Gore's political needs ("She does not have a No. 2 personality," aides like to say) and Democrats may not want to waste time explaining away her husband's financial dealings with China. In addition, her political team is none too pleased over the prospect of tinkering with what should be a relatively easy re-election to the Senate.

Pressure to name a female to the Democratic ticket would increase if Bush chooses a woman for VP. That possibility has sent pundits scurrying to find another Democratic woman, leading some analysts to Barbara Boxer, Nancy Pelosi and Maxine Waters as possibilities. None should be taken seriously.

My money is on Nebraska's Republican Senator Chuck Hagel (Vietnam war hero, foreign policy expert, reformer) and Indiana's Democratic Senator Evan Bayh (Midwesterner, former governor, Catholic, centrist.) Their states' electoral votes are small. But they are likely to tug on California's electoral strings as ably as a native son or daughter.

Contributing editor Marc Sandalow is Washington Bureau Chief for the San Francisco Chronicle. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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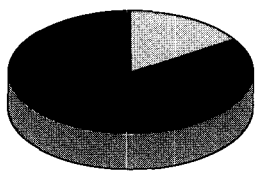

In a state as diverse as California, 84% represents powerful public consensus. Will the budget reflect it?

82% agreed that the Governor and Legislature should allocate at least 25% of the annual payout to strengthen the state's anti-tobacco education and prevention program.

As a matter of fact, the legislatively mandated Tobacco Education Research Oversight Committee recommends that 20% of the settlement revenue—$105 million a year—be dedicated to California programs that have cut tobacco consumption in half, reduced heart and lung disease and cancer, and saved $8 for every $1 invested.

So far, however, not a dime of the Tobacco Settlement has been earmarked for California's comprehensive, integrated anti-tobacco program. With Big Tobacco still spending an estimated $1.5 million a day to *promote* smoking in our state, voters may soon begin to wonder if our elected officials will battle the tobacco industry. It's time for policymakers to do the right thing and the smart thing.

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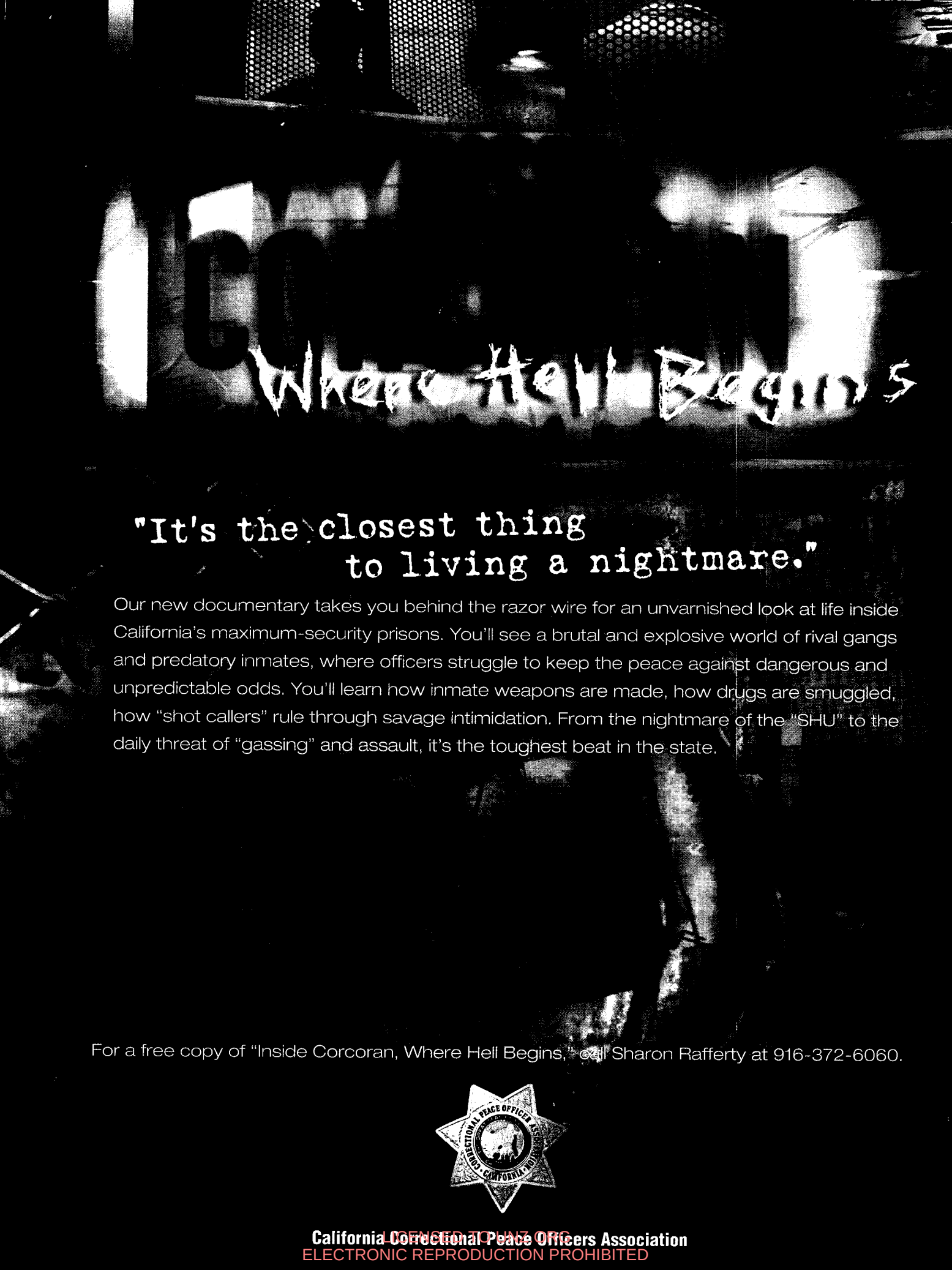

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